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THE ARYAN TRAIL IN IRAN AND INDIA

THE ARYAN TRAIL
IN
IRAN AND INDIA

A NATURALISTIC STUDY OF THE VEDIC HYMNS AND THE AVESTA

BY

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PREFACE

Some sixteen years ago, in the course of a fairly wide reading of the Indian Purāṇa Literature, the Writer came to be persuaded of the essentially synthetic character of the culture it reflected; and the idea occurred to him that to segregate the separate strands which went to produce it and trace them to their sources might be well worth attempting. This attempt led him step by step into making a kind of natural history study of the Upaniṣads, the Brāhmaṇa literature, the Vedas and the dependent Sūtra works; and it ended in his being convinced that the Purāṇa literature as a whole represented the synthesis of at least three distinguishable forms of culture: (1) the Vedic Aryan culture of the Land of the Five Rivers, (2) an Eastern, relatively older and advanced, Vrātya Rājanya culture of the river-basins of the Ganges and the Jamuna, (3) a still older culture which though geographically confined within apparently the same river-basin area was really representative of a very widely prevalent form of which phallism and some variety of the Mother-Goddess cult constituted the distinctive features. The two former clearly appeared to have been immigrant cultures arriving from outside India. The results of that investigation were

published by the Writer in 1934 in his book, "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)."[1]

With these two immigrant cultures thus left in his hands, the Writer could not refrain from looking further backward for trails which might lead him to their sources outside India. The results of this further exploration form the subject of the present book.

The search for trails having thus led him continuously backward in point of time, the present book happens to be concerned with chronologically earlier occurrences than those which engaged the Writer's attention in that earlier work. Both books endeavour to interpret and correlate the anthropological significances of pre-historic material derived mainly from ancient literatures. The literatures which have furnished the material for this book are in the main the Vedic hymns and the Avesta.

The reader will not need to agree with the Author at every point in order to be convinced of the outstanding anthropological interests of the Vedas and the Avesta. Nor will he, it is hoped, fail to appreciate the intrinsic value of a naturalistic approach to the study of what are still regarded by a considerable body of devoted students as "sacred" literature and which have engaged the attention of scholars and *savants* on

[1] "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)," by N. N. Ghose, M.A., B.L., 1934. Book Company, College Square, Calcutta.

account, chiefly, of their linguistic and antiquarian interests, but rarely and casually only as repositories (not, of course, consciously conceived as such) of gradually expanding types of human culture, though the foundations of a natural history approach to the study of this literature had already been truly and firmly laid by Röth so far back as 1846. There must, at this moment, the Writer conceives, be a growing body of readers who will appreciate a naturalistic approach to the study of these literatures, which, if it happens to be unorthodox, is presumably so in no sinister sense.

This advisedly secular approach to the study of the Hindu and Parsi "scriptures," the Writer believes, has possibly enabled him to project some added or even new light *inter alia* upon (*i*) the first beginnings in the old world of the basic industries of human civilization, (*ii*) the correlation between the Indo-Aryan and Magian cultures, which though definitely suspected by Hellenic Greek writers, has been (not inexcusably) lost sight of by the more sceptically minded modern *savant*, (*iii*) the true historical and social setting of the movement of religious reform which is associated with the name of Zoroaster.

The matters investigated in this book formed the subject of a course of University Extension Lectures which the Author delivered in the Department of Anthropology of the Calcutta University

in March and April, 1936, when the late lamented Dr. Panchanan Mitra, M.A., Ph.D. (whose cordial appreciation and encouragement of this work the Author will ever remember) was still its Head.

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N. N. GHOSE

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THE ARYAN TRAIL IN IRAN AND INDIA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY—THE ORIGINS AND ECOLOGY OF CULTURES

§ 1. *The " Racial Genius " Myth.*

1. Much confusion has resulted from the assumption, tacit or expressed (which is found underlying most of the current speculations in the fields of comparative religion, linguistics, ethnology and anthropology), of the existence of fundamentally distinct racial units with fixed physical, mental and cultural characteristics. The complex of factors which go to make up such an ethnic unit has been supposed to possess an individuality all its own and a momentum which tends to maintain that individuality through thick and thin in the most diverse surroundings, so that in the event of two such units coming together, the contributions of each would tend to fall on those of the other in distinct strands, each strand unmistakably pointing to the particular ethnic source from which it is derived. Justification for this assumption

appears to be afforded by contemporary observations of events and movements in quite recent centuries, which mostly concern over-organised peoples (and not communities with undefined, floating and shifting traditions), peoples possessing relatively fixed types of language and written literature and well-defined political and social habits and institutions. These viewed at short range do appear to exhibit an appreciable measure of rigidity and resistance. The observations in question however will, on examination, be found to affect the operations mainly of the intellect at its higher reaches, and ideas generated by such operations which are found usually recorded as written literature and are consciously studied as such. To apply these observations by analogy to account for the growth and modification of culture in every one of its aspects amongst still unformed peoples cannot but prove to be exceedingly misleading.

2. That the assumption, despite its plainly arbitrary character, is still ruling strong is apparent from the increasing currency which the recently coined terms " Proto-Aryan " and " Proto-Semite " are receiving in the abovenamed fields of speculation. It is no doubt perfectly legitimate to speak of a Semitic " family " of languages ; and (for all that the resemblances in their case are neither close nor considerable) of an Aryan family of languages in a sense to be presently explained.

Whilst there are cumulative data pointing to the existence of an ancestral Semitic people speaking a parent Proto-Semitic tongue, all that can be affirmed with assurance of the supposed Aryan family of languages is that, into the composition of the several members thereof, there have entered a number of common linguistic features and elements which afford links for historically connecting them (as well as the peoples who came to speak them) but in ways which still remain to be defined with any approach to precision. The hypothesis that these common linguistic traits necessarily betoken also kinship of blood and racial affinity of one sort or another is no longer actively maintained, although undoubtedly it still continues to colour contemporary thought. The belief, however, that inheritance of blood, once established, will carry with it inheritance of fixed mental habits and tendencies leading to cultural features of marked specificity of a more or less unalterable type continues to dominate every variety of contemporary anthropological and quasi-anthropological literature.

3. There are reasons, other than bare linguistic resemblances, for inferring that there existed a primitive Proto-Semitic people who at intervals dispersed from a more or less limited geographical area in Arabia, carrying with them, and infecting, other peoples and cultures with linguistic peculiarities, ideas and beliefs which they brought

from those homes, they in turn being affected (it may be less strongly in the matter of language, the Semitic language having generally proved a highly dominant one) by those other peoples. But exactly similar inferences have been drawn, in the absence of any similar justifiable reasons, concerning the existence and spread of the "Proto-Aryan." And because some tongues have not admitted of being included in either of these two "families" of languages, the peoples who speak or spoke them have tended (for that reason only) to be left out as racially unclassifiable, the Basques, the Etruscans and the Sumerians, to mention instances.

4. Not that savants, when language fails, show any lack of disposition to determine the racial affinities of the linguistically unclassified peoples by reference to supposedly characteristic *cultural* traits, but these so-called fixed traits, upon examination, are found to have scarcely any basis in realities. They often serve no purpose in fact beyond reflecting the personal prejudices of the savants themselves. Language apart, the term "Aryan," for quite intelligible reasons, has come very generally to be associated with a hypothetical super-race of the most approved habits, the "Semitic" coming a somewhat close second. But absolute unanimity has failed to be achieved, and that quite naturally, as the "most approved habits" themselves have tended to differ according

as the savant has supposed himself to belong by origin to one or the other of these ethnic groups, all of which, it need hardly be pointed out, is very questionable science.

5. The assumption of special habits, customs and cultural traits being inherent in the "genius of a race" is but rarely avowed in these days, except by politicians for purely propaganda purposes. But a vast amount of learning on comparative religion, language and culture has already been built up upon that foundation; and those who are now taking up the tale at the point where it has been left by their predecessors can scarcely avoid slipping into the same grooves of thought and expression.

6. At what rate languages intermix and pass from people to people, and a more useful language supersedes another or others found less useful, overcoming conservative and patriotic prejudices working in the contrary direction, can be seen from events happening under our own eyes. This however must have been an infinitely more common occurrence in prehistoric times, provided peoples of different tongues had but the chance of meeting together in close and intimate contact, which clearly they did time after time in the regions intervening between the Mediterranean Sea and the Delta of the Ganges, in both historic and prehistoric times. And such occurrences must have been happening in earlier ages, though not perhaps to the same extent, in the grass-lands of Eurasia where the

pastoral nomad races, mutually independent units by reason of their very mode of life, must have frequently passed and repassed each other (when they did not actually amalgamate), with recurrent opportunities of making mutually accommodating grazing arrangements, fraternising, marrying and concluding other exchanges of kinds, both material and moral. The existence of many tongues, it is generally overlooked, has been widely recognised in ancient legend and less ancient history as in itself an undesirable thing, which shows at the very least that peoples from the earliest days, so far from being fanatically exclusive, were as a rule eager for social intercourse. The Biblical legend connected with confusion of tongues at Babel and the Avestan aspiration for an apocalypse when all differences in language will disappear, find significant support from an inscription left by the Assyrian monarch Tiglath Pilesar (*circ.* 1100 B. C.) in which he stated that he had " subdued forty-two lands and their princes from beyond the lower Zab to the farther side of the Euphrates, the land of the Hittites and the Upper Sea of the West, by the fifth year of his reign" in order, as he said, "to make them all of one tongue."

7. Language, it must however be borne in mind, is not language only but a great and powerful vehicle of ideas and cultural traits. But if it is seen, superficially at least, to be as catching almost as an infectious disease, it does not really succeed

in working out its fell or beneficent purposes if the attending conditions do not in fact favour its acceptance and spread. Environment therefore operates as a most powerful determinant in the whole complicated process. Primitive peoples, at all events, did not make themselves conversant with foreign tongues for the mere pleasure of such exercises ; and very few who are not primitive do so even to-day unless impelled by some felt necessity naturally arising or created artificially.

8. The reflections above outlined are the outcome of certain studies the writer has had occasion to make of the literatures recorded in the Vedas, the Avesta and in the Hebrew Old Testament in relation to the treatment these have received at the hands of inquiring savants. He himself had started on these studies with a half-formed expectation of discovering from the Vedas and the Avesta the "fundamental" traits of an "Aryan," "Indo-Aryan" or "Indo-Iranian" culture. He had expected in the same way to find traces in the Old Testament of the gradual unfolding, from a primitive "Proto-Semitic" beginning, of the successive stages of the typical "Semitic" culture. He came away from these studies, however, firmly convinced that both the Vedic and the Avestan cultures taken by them selves were highly composite syncretic processes, as indeed appeared to be the case also with the

Hebrew culture found reflected in the Old Testament. The archetypal Aryan and Semitic cultures and the "Proto-Aryan" and "Proto-Semite" he had been looking for equally eluded his grasp.

9. All the three literatures mentioned are hieratic literatures and concern a domain of ideas and concepts which, according to modern notions, should offer the stoutest resistance to foreign contaminations. But nothing in the course of his studies struck the writer more forcibly than the facile receptivity of the earliest priests and their readiness to admit or compromise with foreign gods and foreign beliefs, non-receptivity and intolerance being not only exceptional but conspicuous by their absence. These arrived indeed but at the very latest stages, and owing, wherever they did, to highly exceptional circumstances.

10. And the conviction was further borne in upon him that the ideas and concepts with which each of these cultural systems presumably started and those others which they picked up in their progress through time, owed hardly anything at all to any supposed "genius" of a race or races, but were mostly natural responses of essentially the same order or type of mind to the varying demands of the environments in which from time to time it found itself placed. At the stages of the civilization these peoples started from, the physical environment was no doubt the one that spoke

most loudly to their minds. But it was even then not the whole environment, of which a factor of not the least importance was association (ranging from the most casual to the most intimate) with other peoples and tribes with like or unlike separately evolved customs and ways of thought.

11. The traditional method of approach to the literatures of the Vedas, the Avesta and the Old Testament for comparative purposes has of course been to settle first (as it has suited the tastes and predilections of the inquiring savant to do) what the characteristic (morally flavoured) Aryan, Semitic, Babylonian or Magian features should be, so that whatever in these literatures did not appear to fit into the " features " so determined of the one or the other of these " racial elements " was relegated as an even more outlandish foreign adulteration, Egyptian,[1] Turanian, Cimmerian, Dravidian or what not. Vedic and Avestan material have been repeatedly sought to be sorted out and resolved into characteristically " Aryan features " and equally characteristic "Non-Aryan intrusions"

[1] The Egyptian stock has been steadily rising through the successful archæological labours of Egyptologists, and one does come across savants (not Egyptologists) who would even trace everything that has happened on this planet in the way of culture to the Egyptians or to imitation of Egyptian models. Intimate acquaintance with the details of a hitherto unknown culture tends increasingly to breed respect rather than contempt for it.

by what has been not quite undeservingly stigmatised as the "olfactory test."

12. It is not surprising to find that since savants, themselves owning different race-allegiances, have been joining in the quest, this "olfactory test" has, in its application, been proving more productive of differences than of agreements. Luckily or unluckily, a large measure of agreement had already been reached before this mixture of races took place amongst the inquiring savants themselves. The agreed traits are however as a whole little better than literary fashions or conventions which have become fixed by sheer repetition of opinions thrown off at hazard in the earlier stages of this kind of speculation, and adopted practically without examination and serious scientific criticism of any kind whatsoever.

§ 2. *Ecology of Culture. Plasticity of the Human Mind and its Reactions to Environment.*

13. The archetypal Aryan and Semite being now highly suspect, a different line of approach seems to be called for. What that line should be was fully understood, and partially limned, several decades ago by Sir J. G. Frazer in "The Golden Bough." "The whole subject of the influence which physical environment has exercised on the history of religion," he observed (he was thinking of religion only), "deserves to be studied with more

attention than it has yet received.'' But, as I have already indicated (para. 10), the physical environment (the importance of which is not to be minimised) is a part only of the whole environment to which the human organism actively reacts.

14. Of course, the outstanding difficulty in the way of arriving at correct conclusions lies, first and foremost, in the paucity of workable data, so that whatever line of investigation may be pursued, a considerable element of speculation and hypothesis is bound to enter into the process. Even so, this new line has got to be followed up to its consequences if only to displace speculations and hypotheses *ab initio* untenable, for cogent psychological amongst other reasons

15. The human mind, it will be well to remember always, is not only plastic so that it actively responds and reacts to the environment for the time being in specific ways, it is also facile and can react in any one of several but equally intelligible ways to substantially the same environment. The course of culture is thus not altogether pre-determined; neither is it for that reason erratic, for it is always possible to discover a method, and a psychological one, in even its madnesses.

16. The human mind is besides eminently educable, the environment being its ever-present exacting educator. The mind's intellectual and

emotional endowments and its special aptitudes for adaptation to an environment, it should be further observed, are in the main "acquired characters." Man's "culture," at any stage, is the sum of his special reactions to the special environment in which he finds himself placed, reactions which seem to seek a provisional fixity in a variety of traditions and institutions which, once they have taken definite shapes, form in themselves cumulative factors of that environment. These may very appropriately be discriminated from the purely physical environment as the "social environment."

17. The environment taken as a whole is never fixed, specially when the tribe or people is, as very often it is, itself mobile. And the mental part of the environment is infinitely more yielding and alterable than the physical. Indeed ideas, traditions, beliefs and institutions are far more readily assumed and "swopped" than they were supposed to be a few decades ago. But such as they are at any particular point of time, they (that is to say, the culture itself) play an important part in determining the subsequent turns of that culture. The more the culture grows in complexity and richness the more influence it has on its own future, the balance, initially all in favour of the physical environment, tending in this way more and more to shift towards the mental and cultural part of it.

18. Thus to take an extreme case for illustrative purposes, physically juxtaposed though they may be, the savage aboriginal and the English-speaking settler in Australia to-day live in substantially widely differing environments The nearly irreclaimable savage is and remains what he is because he never has had the chance to be anything else and still lacks it effectively though not to outward appearance ; whereas the white settler is what he is mainly because of his ever-recurring opportunities and incentives to seize it, due mainly to what has been passed on to him in the form of social legacies (not inheritances) by h is ancestors and to the latter by theirs, however much he may have persuaded himself that he is what he is because he started by belonging to a specially favoured superior " racial type." There can be no question that a time was when the ancestors of both started upon the same plane with fundamentally like physical and mental equipments. The difference has been determined by the history and geography through which they have had to make or wade their ways.

19. Most of the white settlers, if asked, will no doubt deny that their ancestors were kneaded from the same clay as the ancestors of the savages and that they are what they are and not what the savages have been because they have been so made by history. They will claim that they and their ancestors have been of the great

" Indo-European," " Aryan " or (the now more fashionable) " Nordic " race, which so far from having at any stage been made by history has been destined from the very beginning to make it. I shall examine more in detail this claim and the data upon which it may be supposed to be based.

CHAPTER II

THE NOMAD PRESSURE UPON AGRICULTURAL ASIA—SYNCRETISM OF CULTURES

§ 1. *The Semitic and Aryan (Nomad) Pressure Fronts on Agricultural Asia.*

20. Spread over a geographical area stretching from the British Isles to the Delta of the Ganges and from Norway to South Persia and Seistan there have been living from almost the earliest beginnings of historical times a variety of peoples speaking what appear on a superficial examination to be closely allied or dialectic variants of an original common tongue. True, the representative members of this family of languages exhibit vastly more numerous and fundamental differences in detail than the remotest amongst the members of the Semitic family of languages. They all however agree in possessing a recognisable type of grammatical structure and have a small stock of words common to them all, namely, those for the numerals, family relationships, parts of the body, certain animals and gods, and a few other things and acts, just those common linguistic factors in fact which a number of primitive peoples, bred in physical environments possessing certain distinctive common features and frequently meeting

together for social and economic intercourses of kinds suitable to their state of culture, would have to evolve to make such intercourses practicable. The testimony of history is fairly clear that none of these varieties of peoples have been autocthonous in the countries where they have been found making history and being made by it in historic times. It is fairly certain too that they irrupted into those countries from the far less productive and hospitable North, where there were only grass-land steppes of nature's growth which, in the beginning, could only accommodate and breed pastoral tribes, living parasitically on flocks of sheep and goats and herds of horses and cattle whom they had somehow succeeded in domesticating and whom they followed perforce from one likely halting place to another in their pursuit of fresh or as yet unexhausted pasture. It is equally certain that the countries into which they irrupted must, from the earliest beginnings of human culture worth taking into account as such, have in large parts accommodated and bred members of that same human species, who had in like manner taught themselves to tame and breed certain plant species upon which they lived in a like if less obviously parasitical manner. That any of the human species in Eurasia, in this prehistoric age, had risen equal to teaching themselves simultaneously the arts of breeding both food plants and food animals to serve them in their several ways

at the same time may safely be discarded as a highly unlikely hypothesis.[2]

21. The irruptions from the North took place on a very extended front, but the dents they were able to make in Syria and Mesopotamia were not very deep ; for this country lay disposed in the shape of a crescent against the fan-shaped northward bulge of the Arabian desert tracts, behind which were the breeding grounds of another variety of nomads whose likes may be seen even to-day in the Bedouins ; and these nomads had forestalled the grass-land nomads from the North by a millennium at least in Syria and Mesopotamia, where they had established states and military organisations which stayed the southward progress of the North-land nomads into these organised territories.

22. There appear to have been several Semitic irruptions into Syria and Mesopotamia in these prehistoric times at fairly long intervals. The dialectic differences observable in the languages they brought with them are not however such as to justify the inference that they had all been different peoples and carriers of different varieties of cultures bred at different independent centres. The region behind the deserts which threw off these overflows of its population was in fact sufficiently restricted geographically to satisfy the

[2] See Note A at the end of this chapter.

requirements of a common nidus and a common centre of dispersal. The " Proto-Semite " thus appears from these considerations to have been a prehistoric fact and reality. These considerations do not apply however to any extent in the case of the Northern nomads, and the analogy of the " Proto-Semite " misapplied in their cases has led only to a wild chase, punctuated by recriminations, for a hypothetical " common centre of Aryan dispersal " carrying with it by implication the very unlikely hypothesis of a single " Proto-Aryan " parent race.

23. The geography of Northern Eurasia clearly discloses no apt possible common centre of Aryan incubation but enormous stretches of grass-lands fringed on the south by what has been sought to be distinguished as the "park-land" belt, beyond which had lain the really effectively cultivable areas in which the agriculturists of the South had their settled homes and cultures suited to that special environment.

24. Unlike the lands of the Southern agriculturists no part of the grass-lands on the North could possibly have been "occupied" territory. The roaming nomad tribes would meet and pass and repass each other repeatedly in a manner inconceivable to the settled agricultural tribes and peoples of the South. Before the occurrence of the catastrophic climatic changes which, it must be supposed, drove these grass-land peoples south-

ward in hungry hordes, these must have lived in circumstances which meant peace and mutual adjustments, upon the whole, between tribe and tribe. Not being any kind of industrialists, and not knowing or having any use for wealth of any kind, which in every form would be an embarassment to their owners in the kind of life they had to lead, they would have neither the desire nor the means to wage wars for booty or conquest against each other or against anybody else. It was hunger which turned these born and bred unwarlike peoples into wolves and hawks when later they swooped down upon the agriculturists.

25. If the "Proto-Semites" may be supposed to have started with the same common language which later produced dialectic variations, the tendency in the quite different conditions obtaining in the glass-land country would be towards tribes speaking, it may be, originally different tongues developing a common stock of words and other common linguistic features for facilitating exchanges of intercourse between tribes meeting at fairly frequent intervals. The common features presented by the so-called Indo-Aryan family of languages are more easily accounted for by this than by the hypothesis of a common descent from an originally single tribe.

26. All these of course are surmises but, I hope, geographically "necessary" ones. What is certain historically speaking, however, is that

when the Aryans enter into history, they nowhere exhibit themselves as o .t and out nomads, though they still appear to carry predominantly pastoral habits and outlooks. By this I mean they still value cattle for the meat and milk they supply and not mainly as important accessories in the operations of agriculture, which they chiefly came to be amongst all originally agricultural people as a rule. They know some agriculture and practise simple forms of trading, and, though apt to move forward upon the slightest provocation, have learned to attach some value to " homes." Their social structure is patriarchal, the tribes being composed of household units so organised, and ready to federate in a somewhat loose manner under elected chieftainries.

§ 2. "*Park-land*" *Ideology*.

27. The best succinct formulation I have come across of a theory which tries to take in these facts, and the linguistic peculiarities previously noticed at the same time, is to be found in Mr. J. L. Myres's hand-book in the Home University Library Series, " The Dawn of History." At pp. 196-97 of this book occurs this passage :

" We are probably not far wrong in regarding the first users of this type of speech as having inhabited some parts, perhaps many contiguous

parts, of the park-land country which fringes these steppes, and as having spread in a long period of slow development, accelerated from time to time by drought and migrations caused by drought. Some drifted in moister periods in the direction of the treeless steppe, losing or confusing their vocabulary for forestry and farming ; others, in dry spells, further into the forests, with corresponding forgetfulness of their more pastoral habits. Much recent controversy over details would have been avoided if it had been realized earlier by students of these languages that the geographical regime of all grass-land regions is liable to these periodic changes ; and that the immediate effect of such change is either to alter the mode of life of the inhabitants till it suits their new surroundings, or else to drive them out into regions where they still can live in the ancestral way." And bearing in mind that the differences between the Indo-European languages are much more marked than between those of the Semitic group Mr. Myres was of opinion that these could be quite satisfactorily accounted for by assuming much longer periods of time for their differentiations or else much potent and varied changes in environment and mode of life.

28. I hope to be able to bring forward reasons and considerations which will point to a different theory. But the theory formulated in the above

extract presents certain inherently doubtful features which call for examination at once.

29. Mr. Myres appears to have regarded his Proto-Aryans as a people who were agriculturists with settled houses for cultivation purposes and pastoral nomads at the same time in relation to their flocks and herds, and has suggested that they became from time to time pure nomads or pure agriculturists according as they were forced to shift northward or southward owing to climatic exigencies of one kind or another. The possibilities of these later transformations (which translated themselves again without delay into altered cultural and linguistic habits) need hardly to be canvassed, since the original conditions assumed, squarely put as I have done it, would be, humanly speaking, incapable of happening.[3]

30. Then as regards the supposed "park-land" home of the "Proto-Aryans," by this must have been meant lands which admitting of cultivation at odd favourable spots yet had grass enough at the same time to maintain the cultivators' cattle wealth which naturally would have been far fewer than the nomads' herds and flocks. "Park-land," in other words, was land which the agriculturist would necessarily avoid if he had to depend solely on agriculture (since what he would

[3] See para. 20 *supra*, and Note A at the end of this chapter.

get by agriculture would have had to be eked out by flocks and herds feeding on fodder of nature's own providing); and land again which the nomad pure and simple would equally have to avoid (since the grass raised by nature would not be enough to sustain his numerous flock and herd for any period worth staying for at that one spot). It is really impossible to imagine that these abnormally poor steppe and, in part, forest lands could really ever have fed and bred any of the numerous Northern hordes who swooped down upon and overwhelmed the agricultural settlements down in the South in prehistoric times.[4]

31. This "park-land" home of the Proto-Aryans, I can scarcely avoid concluding, is a scholastic conception with nothing in the world of facts to answer to it. The poor grass-land fringe (christened "park-land") which stood between the rich grass-lands of the steppes and the almost spontaneously productive agricultural lands down south must in those early ages have remained unoccupied, except perhaps for small roving bands of gypsy vagabonds who would camp now in the vicinity of a nomad encampment and later in the outskirts of settled agricultural villages to pilfer and barter,[5] because at this stage such lands would

[4] See Note A at the end of this chapter.

[5] There is evidence in very early Sanskrit literature of prowling gypsy-like bands of nomads straying into the

be below the lowest margin of productivity either as feeding ground for the nomads' herds or for cultivation by the agriculturists. This "no-man's land" could be made productive only by nomads who in addition to their native art of cattle-rearing had acquired from the agriculturists the art of cultivation, or by agriculturists who somehow or other had picked up in addition to their own native art a knowledge of cattle-rearing. The settled agriculturists might not improbably have learned their first lessons in cattle-rearing from those very thieving gypsies from whom they got the cattle in exchange for gold and iron which the nomads are seen from the earliest times to have keenly prized for ornament and weapon. But it is easy to see that the nomads could not possibly pick up the rudiments either of cultivation or of smelting otherwise than by actual demonstration made under their eyes after they had come and settled down amongst the agriculturists as the latter's "lords and masters," and pupils at one and the same time.

32. In the face of the above patent inadequacies of Mr. Myres's theory, the likelier hypothesis, I venture to suggest, is that those so-called Proto-Aryan tribes everywhere along the whole extended front of 2,500 miles or more from the Carpathians to the Tien-Shan mountains started on their

Vedic *viś* settlements, and being Aryanised by the Conversion-Vrātyastoma ritual. See the author's "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)," pp. 6-16.

cultural career as pure-bred nomads in their original grass-land homes in the Northern steppes which lay beyond the so-called "park-land" fringe.

33. These nomads, I conceive, must have been happy and contented enough for long ages. Only widespread catastrophic geographical and climatic changes occurring in their grass-land environment could have led to their flinging themselves in more or less unorganised bands across the "no man's lands" spoken of before into the hearts of the agricultural settlements. The grass-lands, it appears, had continually shrunk owing to progressive desiccation. It was hunger and not the lure of an empire's wealth lying at their feet which they might have coveted, that drew these early nomads into the south. In the kind of life they originally led, wealth in every form would be an embarassment, so that presumably they had to be careful in keeping due checks as well upon an excessive accumulation of their moving cattle wealth, the only wealth that they knew and appreciated, as upon the number and times of appearance of their own children. The exposure of superfluous children and the offer to the gods of whole hecatombs appear for this reason to have been perfectly natural Proto-Aryan practices. Their historic late successors who broke up the Roman Empire had long previously ceased to be nomads pure and simple, and had learned to value and

hanker after the wealth that invitingly lay on the other side of the frontiers, in ways which would have appeared inconceivable to the pure-bred nomad. (See paras. 195 ff. *infra*.)

§ 3. *"Proto-Aryans," True and False.*

34. That the Northern nomads came down into the south and forced themselves upon the settled agricultural peoples of these regions is beyond question. But how exactly they disposed themselves amongst their unwilling hosts must be, and perhaps for ever remain, a matter for conjecture.

35. It is generally assumed that whole hordes came and settled themselves as rulers over the indigenous population who thereupon became their serfs for all practical purposes. But this facile occurrence could have taken place as imagined to a very limited extent only. The nomad arrivals could not obviously displace all at once the agriculturists and take over wholesale their business which they had not the knowledge and skill to carry on with their own hands. But a whole horde could not equally obviously impose itself profitably as lords and masters over this native agricultural population who at this juncture would be irreplaceable. Nor is there any justification for assuming that these early raiders were, relatively speaking, as well-led and organised as were the Franks and Goths of later ages, and even these were not highly organised close-knit bodies in the modern sense.

36. I consider it to have been in the highest degree probable that these earlier hordes were unorganised except in a quite superficial way. "Each for himself and the devil take the hindmost" must have been the ruling consideration in the minds of these hunger-driven crowds, and on their southward march they must have constantly left behind them stragglers who remained to whiten the intervening territory with their bones. Only specially enterprising and well-knit groups amongst them whom experience had already taught the virtue of organisation and joint action, would be able to develop into a striking force even against peaceful agriculturists ; and one may be quite certain that the agriculturists who, unlike the nomads, were also passable industrialists and knew the use of metals could not have been very unresisting opponents. Everywhere, presumably, it would be the local agriculturist gentry who would have to make room for these enterprising groups, and these only, amongst the intruders. The others would continue their march onward and even back again, this time led very probably by the very leaders of the agriculturists whom their own leaders had ousted and displaced. Whether these bands passed southward or back again into the so-called "park-lands," these new leaders would on the whole be more efficient and resourceful than were those who had displaced them; for they would know how to make poor agricultural lands down

south or in the "park-lands" to the north productive through combining agriculture with cattle-rearing, both of which arts the new leaders and their Proto-Aryan *clientele* between them would know how to carry on simultaneously. It was in this way that, I surmise, the bulk of the nomads came to develop into shepherds and agriculturists at the same time in the "park-land" belt, which, as already pointed out, could not have entertained this kind of people from the very beginning, that is to say, before the synthesis and syncretism I have supposed took place. And it would then be the descendants of these very peoples who in later historic ages would come to organise themselves into marauding bands in a way the earlier hunger-driven nomads could never have done, and become the scourges of empires and kingdoms and the highly civilized inhabitants thereof, under the designation of Goths, Vandals, Huns, Turanians, Turks and Tartars. The kind of "swopping" of leaders that I have imagined above appears to have been a not uncommon occurrence amongst these marauding hordes of later days, and was presumably even more frequent in those earlier times.

37. Meanwhile, the nomad gentry who have imposed themselves as rulers in the hitherto rich ultra-agriculturist areas would turn out into famous kings and emperors, as their Semitic forerunners had done before them in Assyria and

Babylonia. They would have about them enough followers of their own order to keep alive the knowledge of cattle-rearing they had brought with them and which the agriculturists would learn from them for the first time, or better than before, supposing they had any gypsy schooling in that behalf already. Thus, alike in these lands as well as in the "park-land" areas, there would be a synthesis of the two cultures bringing in its train much syncretism of beliefs, ideas and traditions (theosophical ones amongst others).[6] The progress of event as I have conjectured it would be seen to assign a place (I venture to think) to every piece of relevant data previously indicated, including all those relied upon by Mr. Myres for his theory.

§ 4. *Linguistic and Cultural Syncretism.*

38. As regards language, unless two tongues happen to be allied in structure, though there must always be some amount of syncretism in any event, the tendency (as our own experiences show and as appears to be borne out also by history) is for one

[6] My hypothesis may give the key to how the territories intervening between the steppes and the fertile river basins of Mesopotamia and the Indus came to be famous for stock-raising since the beginning of recorded history. Ansan, Susa, Parsua, according to linguists, all got their names from the horse. Hommel, "Civilization of the East" (Dent), p. 133.

on the whole to prevail over the other. As the Semitic prevailed over the Sumerian, Elamitic and other tongues in Syria and Mesopotamia, so did the various Northern grass-land modes of speech (which from constant and repeated contacts had already developed many common characteristics and evolved many common names for objects and acts in familiar use and application amongst the several tribes who spoke them) prevail over those of the agriculturists, assuming that their tongues were fundamentally unallied with the nomads', which would generally be the case, though I shall have occasion, before I have done, to notice at least one notable apparent exception in the language of the Magians, which it will be seen was and remained an Aryan language throughout.

39. Some of these mixed peoples would, it is clear, start on their career of syncretism in what to substantial portions of the population would be new geographical environments; but the social environment would, by reason of the mixture of races itself, be different for every single member of each of these mixed communities. It is unnecessary to labour this point further; but it must be plain from what has been stated already that the complicated operation of this new environment upon these mixed peoples would leave little room for the free play of any special, inveterate, "genius" of any "race," be it Aryan, Semite, Magian, Elamite or anything else. The genetist

will recognize in this "genius of a race" idea a curiously perverted Weismannism projected into the mental world, and there misapplied again to what according to all tests must be considered to have been "acquired characters."

40. Before concluding this section, I consider it desirable to draw the readers' special attention to a very valuable piece of Chinese evidence, dated 128 B.C., bearing on conditions which prevailed at that date in the typically "park-land" territory of Parthia and Bactria. It is cited by Dr. J. H. Moulton at p. 85 of his book on "Early Zoroastrianism," his source being Mr. W. W. Tarne's paper, "*Notes on Hellenism in Bactria and India*," published in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XXII, 268-293. This Chinese evidence was contained in a report of a Mission of Tchang K'ien to the North of the Oxus. The Chinese envoy found in Ta Yuan (Khorassan=Parthia) and Ta-hia (=Bactria) two classes of population, "nomads" and "unwarlike." Of the latter he says that "they can make themselves understood from Ferghana to Parthia with differences of dialect." "These men," according to the report, "have deep blue eyes and large beards and whiskers and they are astute traders." In Ta-hia (=Bactria) the envoy saw no supreme ruler, each city and town electing its own chief. They appeared to him to pay great deference to their women, the husbands being guided by them in

their decision. These observations of the Chinese envoy have needlessly perplexed Dr. Moulton who found it hard to harmonise the blue eyes, large beards and whiskers and great regard for the peoples' women-folk (traits so entirely those of Tacitus's Germans) with the " unwarlike-ness" (a highly un-German virtue). Dr. Moulton's perplexity arose from his having been a firm believer in the " racial genius " doctrine which requires and expects ethnologically related peoples[7] to exhibit the same complex of physical and moral traits, however widely differentiated they might be environmentally or separated spatially. But the reader who has discarded the Aryan " eidolon " of the now weakening traditional anthropology of the last century will have as little difficulty as I have had in apprehending the entire feasibility of a people born with blue eyes, large beards and whiskers and a profound respect for their women developing a peaceful disposition in an environment which did not call for warlike qualities in their possessors. These people, I have been led to infer from considerations which will be discussed in Chapter IV of this book, were not Iranian Aryans (who were pugnacious enough) but Magian

[7] Dr. Moulton assumed from their beards, eyes and whiskers that these people must have been Aryans, their regard for women providing him with corroborative indications in the same direction.

Aryans or at the very least Magianised Aryans. Magian teaching joined with the Magian manner of life, it will be seen from Chapter IV, could not but tend to make people peace-loving and unwarlike. To be an Aryan is by no means necessarily to be a fire-eating swashbuckler, according to sane scientific anthropology.

NOTE A : THE ECOLOGICAL BEARING OF THE SEED-GRASSES UPON THE PRODUCTION OF HUMAN CULTURE.

(*See Paras. 20 to 33.*)

How, where and when the two basic industries of the civilization of the Old World, namely, agriculture and cattle-keeping, first came to be practised by those who may be said to have led the van in the evolution of the mixed agricultural-*cum*-pastoral culture which appears to confront students of the beginnings of history, has long remained an unsolved problem of anthropology. It is becoming increasingly evident, however, that the growth of both these industries, and through them of human civilization itself has been conditioned and made ecologically possible by the prior appearance from late Eocene times of the seed-grasses, and the gradual occupation by them of the open steppes and alluvial river basins which had been brought into existence and then made gradually

fit for such occupation by conformable geo-physical changes. Those which took possession of the steppes and grass-lands of Northern Eurasia just sufficed for the evolution of the several species of hoofed animals, some of which, tracked and followed as game in the first instance and later domesticated by the pastoral nomads, became the cattle-wealth of mankind for all future ages. The seed-grasses which invaded the alluvial areas, domesticated in a similar manner, laid the foundations of the future agricultural industry of all mankind. There are thus *a priori* ecological reasons for supposing that the pastoral and agricultural industries were not and could not have been originally evolved by one and the same people at one time and at one and the same place. The "park-land" interspersed between these areas had not the ecological potentiality to give birth initially to either of the two industries, and must have remained a kind of "no man's land" until the nomad pastoralists, from contact with the settled agriculturists of the alluvial plains, learned the latter's art, or *vice versa*; and until either of these peoples, thus artificially taught and educated, or both combining, were able to ply both industries together at the same time in these originally inhospitable areas and thereby make them sufficiently productive to sustain, not stray families of fishers and hunters only, but the teeming and swarming hives of civilized human culture. Not before this education

should have been undertaken and accomplished, would these "park-land" regions be ecologically sufficient to give birth to metallurgy, and there is evidence that this originated somewhere near Northern Persia before the 4th Millennium B. C. at least.

The fact that all these three industries are found being pursued in historic times by the same people in Asia and Egypt, is thus not sufficient by itself to justify the inference that all the three arts aforesaid were invented at the same time by the same people at one and the same place, in view of insuperable ecological difficulties the problem appears to present.

The matter however is fortunately not left entirely to *a priori* reasonings, for, as will be seen in the next chapter, the older strata of the literature of the Vedas furnish the "missing links" needed to show that the Proto-Aryan ancestors of the Rig-Vedic Indians started in their cultural career in the northern grass-lands of Eurasia as pure-bred pastoral nomads with no knowledge at all of agriculture, living altogether parasitically upon their flocks and herds, and following these over wide grass-land expanses, with no settled homes of any kind which would admit of the pursuit by them of any kind of agriculture, to say nothing again of the proper kind of seed-grasses having been available in those regions for the purpose.

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CHAPTER III

Ecological and Syncretic Evolution of the Vedic Gods

§ 1. *Introductory.*

41. The hypotheses previously outlined, based mainly as they have been on *a priori* considerations, I shall now endeavour to support and illustrate by data collected from the literature of the Vedas and the Avesta.

42. There is general agreement amongst modern Vedic scholars that the hymns of the Rig-Veda were composed not earlier than the middle of the Second Millennium B.C. and some of them have certainly been of much more recent origin. It is also conjectured not without reason that they took final shape on the soil of the Panjab and some even further east on this side of the Sarasvati. I hope to be able to show, however, that though this might have been generally the case, many of the hymns must have been composed far earlier in point of time, to be carried by their composers with much other mental furniture to the Land of the Five Rivers, for many of the hymns in whole or in part are distinctly reminiscent of an environment which did not belong to this land.

43. Some of the hymn-stuff is unmistakably and exclusively suggestive of what I have conjectured to have been the original grass-land habitat of the Aryan in his nomad state, and some originating in that habitat appears to have received subsequent impresses from other environments which were neither of the grass-lands nor of the Land of the Five Rivers. The Vedic hymns show abundant traces of organic growth by the addition, subtraction and even transformation of material, due to passage through strange environments. What an absorbing story of syncretic adaptations to changing environments they might have been made to unfold if contemporary materials to allow of comparative studies had been more abundant than they actually are. As it is, we have to make the best of what little of it is available eking the same out by the help of the "scientific imagination."

§ 2. *The Vedic Gods.*

(*a*) *Pūṣan and Soma.*

44. Of all the gods celebrated and worshipped in the Vedic hymns, Pūṣan was unmistakeably the one who substantially remained the pastoral peoples' deity as he was originally conceived, and could only have been conceived, by his pure-bred nomad worshippers ranging over the northern grass-land steppes upon the tracks of their flocks

and herds. The fact that Pūṣan retained his distinctive character as a northern grass-land nomad pastoral people's deity in every one of his features even after the Vedic Aryans had turned into passable agriculturists and traders and had actually learned to boast of these accomplishments, shews that these people had retained a strongly flavoured streak of pastoralism in their social and mental make-up even to that sophisticated stage.

45. Pūṣan as hymned was a protector and multiplier of cattle (RV.VI. 37). His car was drawn by goats (RV.V. 53.8, 58.2, 55.3). Pūṣan, of course, was a firmament-god. Living unsheltered under the wide heavens, and a plaything of the forces he saw enacted there from day to day, upon a niggardly earth which needed to be constantly helped by light and moisture that the heavens only could bestow, in order to provide the sustenance necessary for his cattle, the grass-land nomad knew nowhere else to look to for the guardian deities of his destiny than those same heavens. His gods thus were mostly sky-gods (*divyas, devas, daevas*)

46. Pūṣan had his abode in the heavens (RV.II.40.4) where he was the presiding genius, at the same time, of Light which thawed, warmed and discriminated everything, and the even more pervasive Moisture which sustained and nourished everything. He is accordingly pictured as wielding a golden spear (RV. I. 42.6), wherewith armed,

he sails in a golden boat across the aerial sea [8] (RV. VI. 58.3). He thus beholds the whole universe for which reason he is the god to guide his worshippers upon roads and journeys (RV. I. 42.1, X.17.6, 59.7, 85.26 ; AV.VI.73.3) ; and the god too to guide the spirits of the departed over the beyond (RV.X.17.3-5 ; AV. XVI. 9, XVIII.2.53). His worshippers ask him, the all-seeing and all-discovering, specifically to lead them over a country rich in pastures and to smite away from their path the destructive and injurious wolf, the waylayer, the thief and the robber (RV.I.42.2, 3, 7, 8). The way-weary beseech him to send them a man who will point the way to the next suitable halting place (RV. VI. 54.7) ; and if the worshippers are lucky, Pūṣan may himself appear to point it out, saying : "it is here." (RV.VI.54.2.) Keen-eyed and alert, Pūṣan loses none of his worshippers' cattle and he sees to it that no animal of theirs is injured or

[8] The term for "boat" is "*nau*" which might stand for any kind of contrivance for going across water and is therefore not quite aptly translated as "ship" by Muir. The word translated as "sea" is "*samudra*" which might equally well stand for any considerable sheet of water, such as a river or lake. The readiness with which the Vedic Aryan poets are seen to resort to the sea and mountain metaphors to describe occurrences in the aerial heavens testifies to the extensive range of their normal peregrinations in the wake of their flocks.

falls into a pit (RV.VI.54.7-8). In one verse, he is even invoked to direct "this exploring band of ours" to the attainment of its desired object (RV.VI.56.5).[9]

47. In RV.VI.55.4-5 occur two striking passages in which Pūṣan is glorified as the lover (*jāra*) of his sister and the husband of his mother! No deities answering to these relationships are named in the *ṛchas*. But the fastidious will receive no shock from them if he will only remember Pūṣan as the guardian deity of flocks and herds. The Vedic poets knew well enough how to use the paradox as a poetical figure for recording a crude but familiar fact of pastoral economy.

[9] The exploring band might be out looking just as well for brides as for pastures for the tribe; for the invocation in RV.IX. 67.10 is: "Pūṣan who has goats for steeds is our protector in every journey. May he make us possessors of damsels" (Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, p. 301, note 7). As the verse is: *Avita no ajāśva Pūṣā yāmani yāmani ābhakṣat kanyāsu naḥ*, Sāyaṇa's second guess of the meaning of the latter part of the passage is obviously the better one. "Lead us to (where there be) damsels" would be an apt English rendering of it which would fit into the context admirably. To the reader it need cause no surprise to learn that starting as the deity who led the tribe in its quest for brides, Pūṣan should in the later hymns (RV.X.85.26.37) come to be invoked as the deity to preside over and bless the marriage ceremonials and the conjugal relationship generally. The Aśvins' similar interest in nuptials appears to have evolved as an after-thought in like manner.

48. But like all true poets, the Vedic seers had fits of inspirational hyperbole. In one of these, Pūṣan is celebrated conjointly with Soma as being the generators, not of wealth only, but of heaven, of earth, and as being preservers of the world. The gods, we are further told, made these two the centre-points of immortality (RV.II.41.1, 2). Soma prepares his worshippers for the joys of paradise (RV. IX.113.7) whilst Pūṣan leads them to it. RV.II.40.3 credits the pair with the power and responsibility for making the planets run their courses, the one from his abode in the heavens and the other from his in the earth and air—the prince of plants, the first to present itself to the nomad as fit offering for his gods, having had the mountains for its habitat. (See also RV.I.93.6 ; X.34.1.) This was a palpable exaggeration. But there was no exaggeration in the passages in which Soma who supplied the drink and Pūṣan who supplied the meat and milk were invoked as the joint inspirers of the nomads' prayers. (RV.VI. 47.3 ; IX. 96.5, 6 ; X. 26.4, 5).

49. Pūṣan having been a non-agriculturists' god by origin, doubts naturally arise at times as to whether he is properly worshipped by offerings of "meals" with butter (*karambha*), RV.VI.56.1 ; *contra* RV.VI.57.2. The "meals," of course, were agricultural products (ground cereal).

50. Haoma (Soma) is found clearly associated with "immortality," and with cows' meat less

clearly, in the Avestan literature also (see para. 224 ff. *post*).

51. These jointly addressed hymns (and addressed to them as associates and not as rivals) appear to indicate that the same tribe owned both these gods. Their association is in the fullest sense co-operative.

52. Quite otherwise was Pūṣan's association with Sūryā, the daughter of Sūrya, the Sun-god, and with the Aśvins.

53. The tribe who worshipped Pūṣan and Soma appears in course of time to have picked up Sūrya in a torrid environment for reasons which will be indicated when Sūrya comes up for consideration. One verse makes "the gods give in marriage to Pūṣan Sūryā, the daughter of Sūrya, whose messenger[10] he has been designated as being in a previous verse (RV.VI. 58.2-4). In another verse the wooer designed for her is his colleague and friend Soma though the party who finally turns out to be the winner of her as bride is the Aśvin twins, and at this ceremony, oddly enough, the gods for some reason or other approve of Pūṣan's adopting the Aśvins as his parents (RV.X. 85.9-14) !

[10] Pūṣan nowhere in the hymns is equated with the Sun-god. In one other verse, he has been spoken of as a dependent associate of the other Sun-god Savitṛ (RV.X. 139.1). He is equated in later Indian literature with the Sun, but not before his worshippers had become completely depastoralised.

54. The Aśvins, I have convinced myself, were also gods of Light and Moisture, one undistinguishable twin standing for the one, whilst the other stood for the other principle, the twins functioning jointly, indistinguishably and indissolubly as one person, so that to have admitted them into a pantheon of which Pūṣan was a member already, would have meant duplication of gods, at the very least. Nor was this the whole trouble. Mitrā-Varuṇa (similar twins originally but not quite so undistinguishably, since Mitra stood more for Light and Varuṇa more for Moisture) were also joint presiding spirits of the same twin principles of life and growth, who not only obtained admission like the Aśvins into that one and the same pantheon but at some stage came to be the kings and rulers thereof. Pūṣan, the Aśvins and Mitrā-Varuṇa thus give us the trails of three distinct similarly living nomad tribes who each had their own gods of these two (to them) all-important principles of organic existence, which the tribes were biologists enough to apprehend and discern were what sustained the whole nomad economy. In order to coalesce without merger, these sets of gods had to specialise in special directions, pretendedly if not really.

55. The trouble between Pūṣan and the Aśvins was settled by the former adopting the latter as his parents, which was quite a god-like thing to do, however difficult on the part of mortals.

After this, the Aśvins became the "deliverer," and Pūṣan got accustomed to being called "*vimucho napāt*" "son of the deliverer." (RV.I.42.1, VI.55.1). What these titles signified will appear when the Aśvins will presently come up for consideration. Mitrā-Varuṇa too will need very special treatment. They are introduced here to show that syncretism and synthesis were unavoidable even before the nomads had occasion to leave their grass-land homes for the entirely different environment of the South.

56. A few words more on the "Prince of Plants," Soma (*mahiṣah parṇī*, RV.IX.82.3), appear to be called for. It is indeed more than doubtful if Soma was ever equated with the Moon in strictly Vedic Aryan times. The only Rig-Vedic verse which points indubitably to the settled identity of the later Indian sacred literature belongs to some of the latest additions to this Veda and occurs in Maṇḍala X (RV. X. 85.3). The Moon was quite intelligibly of no very great account to the grass-land nomads who could not possibly move with their herds and flocks in night time. The Vedic Aryans appear so completely to ignore this (to the nomads) useless freak of nature that it might, for all they cared, just as well, not have existed.[11]

[11] The people of the river valley of the Jamuna and the Ganges might have discovered the Moon-god for themselves in their own environment, as the Magians (Aryan

57. In the Rig-Veda, Soma is the personified spirit of the sweet, honied, pungent, exhilarating,

by origin, according to my conclusions) did their Moon-god, Mah, in theirs. Mah is quite undistinguished compared with the Moon-god of later Indian mythology, who must have been indigenous and not borrowed. The moon is too suggestively manifest in this part of the world to need borrowing. See RV. X. 85.19.

In the Babylonian mythology, the Moon-god takes decided precedence over the Sun-god.

This progressive appreciation of the Moon at the expense of the Sun as object of praise and worship, keeping apparent step with environmental changes from temperate to torrid, and from a mildly and beneficently moist to explosive monsoon conditions, will be intelligible, if it be borne in mind that the "moist" light of the Moon appeared to people in these warmer regions to furnish just that balanced mixture of warmth and moisture which primitive peoples in Eurasia are universally seen to have regarded as essential for the sustenance of all animal and plant life. Pūṣan, Savitṛ, the Aśvins, Mitrā-Varuṇa will all appear to have taken rank in the estimation of the grass-land Proto-Aryans in the measure in which they appeared to supply this "principle of life" (*elan vital*) of the organic world. The environmental changes which attended their passage into those warmer regions will be seen to have disturbed the original emplacements of each of these divinities in the pantheon of this people. The manner in which gods react to environment is finely brought out by this amongst other illustrations.

It is notable finally that in the welter of mythologies which grew up around the Eastern Mediterranean countries, some tribes were led to discover this principle of life in the

healing juice of the mountain-born plant which, quaffed by Indra, made him invincible for the benefit of the Āryas in foreign climes (RV.VI.47. 1.2, VI.74.1-4, and para. 60, *post*) and which, nearer home, called forth "ardent conceptions" in his worshippers (RV.VI.47.3). No better proof of the latter fact need be looked for than in the unabashed exaggerations of the texts which will be found conveniently collected in Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, at pp. 266-69. In these verses, the " inspirer of ardent conceptions " ends by ascribing to himself the power of generating, ordering, regulating and sustaining the entire cosmos in all its varied manifestations. (See in particular, RV.IX.96.5, IX.87.2). *Credat Judaeus Apella.*[12]

emanations of the planet Venus rather than in those of the Moon, so that one finds in the religious beliefs enshrined in these mythologies the Earth-Mother, the Moon (when conceived as a female) and the planet Venus competing or coalescing for the office of the fecund mother of all life.

12 He even stretches out the atmosphere which he is credited with ability to irradiate in the same manner as he is able to generate the waters, plants and cattle (RV. I. 91.22); and in concert with the Pitṛs he stretches out the Sky, and the Earth (RV.VIII. 48.13). All this undoubtedly puts an unusual strain on the modern readers' imagination and credulity.

In the earliest extant commentary on the Vedic hymns, that of Yāska, the author meets and refutes the audaciously sceptical affirmation of one of his predecessors, Kautsa,

(*b*) *Indra, Vāyu, Viṣṇu and the Maruts.*

58. Unlike the forced association of Pūṣan with Sūrya and the Aśvins, the association of Indra with Pūṣan, Soma and Vāyu does not appear to suggest syncretism ; it is of too close and

that the Vedic texts were so obscure, unmeaning and mutually contradictory that they did not admit of a rational exposition. Kautsa had quite excusably failed to see that the Rig-Vedic hymns were for the most part highly charged poetry, subtle and at the same time unsophisticated, and not compositions advisedly built upon a consciously fabricated ground-work of theosophy, just what he and his contemporaries had been led to look for in them. To find such ultra-rationalistic views concerning the Vedas being entertained and seriously debated several hundred years or more before the Christian era and two thousand years or more before Sāyaṇa is a most heartening and refreshing experience to persons in the predicament of the present writer. Kautsa, it will be seen, has found a modern successor in M. Charles Autran. See Note B on "M. Charles Autran and the Vedic Texts" at the end of Chapter III.

In paragraph 226 *infra*, Haoma and Soma will be shown to have become an object of worship as a mythical entity, more or less, amongst both the Zoroastrians and Vedic Aryans equally, in like manner as Ardvi Sura Anāhita will be seen to have become one amongst the former. It may, in that context, be relevant to observe the remarkable fact that the Vedic hymns addressed specially to Soma are practically all found relegated in one single Maṇḍala, the Ninth, the canonical authority of which is appreciably lower, and that the reputed authors of the hymns are all

co-operative a character.[13] Indra and Vāyu must therefore have been members of the same pantheon with Pūṣan and Soma from the beginning. But there are distinct indications that he grew in stature with every successive change in the physical and moral environment of the tribe, reaching his highest (which was not all-round very high) in the environment of the Panjab.

59. The antiquity of Indra as an Aryan deity is attested by the occurrence of his name in the company of Varuṇa, Mitra and the Nāsatyas (Aśvins), as the gods of the Aryan Mitanni Kings, in a Boghaz-kui inscription as old as the middle of the Second Millennium B. C.

60. Indra in his latest Vedic Aryan phase develops personal traits to an extent none of the other gods of the same pantheon have been seen to do. He becomes the personification of the host-leader, but many times magnified, and in certain verses nearly comes to bear to the Āryas much the same relation as Yahve bore to the Jews. (See RV. I. 51. 8, 103. 3, 130.8 ; X. 49.2, etc.) This he could not possibly have begun doing before his

non-descript individuals unknown to fame—all of which appear to indicate that, when collected, they had already become traditional reminiscences of receding (if not lost) practical importance.

[13] See Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 143, 269-70, for texts bearing on this point.

worshippers found it necessary to abandon the grass-lands and fling themselves on the agricultural settlements in the South for the sake of subsistence. The peace-loving nomads had to be robbers and plunderers first before they would need a host-leader of the calibre and character of Indra.

61. A good friend and a bad enemy, Indra's character is decidedly lacking in balance, as a Soma-quaffing bully's could scarcely avoid being. As the host-leader of a disinherited people out searching for a new home, he could not well afford to have the high moral elevation and rectitude of Varuṇa, and these virtues he appears never to have set any store by, himself, at any time. (See RV.V.34.3-5.) He is justifiably addressed occasionally as *svarāt* (self-dependent); but at times also as *samrāt* (all-lord) and *asura* (divine spirit), RV.I.174.1; III.46.1, 49.2; IV. 21.10; VI.19.2; VIII. 79.6, etc., titles which, as will be seen, came to belong *de jure* only to Varuṇa. But these obviously were tricks of flattery on the parts of his worshippers which could have misled neither the worshippers nor the god worshipped. It was always an advantage to have Indra for ally when enemies were about (a condition in which the Vedic Aryans found themselves perennially placed in the environment of the Land of the Five Rivers), and bluff and easy-going as he was, it was no hard

matter to win him even by palpable flattery ; and he was worth winning over, for he was might, that is to say, physical power, personified.[14] The title *vṛtrahan*, of which the original significance can be correctly collected from the Avestan Vere-traghna (assault-repeller), fits this phase of him admirably. But the equivalent Vedic designation *vṛtrahan* was frequently misinterpreted in India for application to quite another aspect of him, that, namely, in which he was figured as the redoubtable fighter and confounder of the Drought-Demon, with the result that the term Vṛtra (etymologically meaning " assault ") came to be taken as the proper name of the Drought-Demon himself (his name is Apaosha in the Avesta). I find myself in entire agreement with Dr. J. H. Moulton in his view that the Vṛtra of the Vedic hymns was " a creation of imaginative mythology on the part of Indra's Indian worshippers" (Moulton, Early Religious Poetry of Persia, pp. 39-40).

62. But though this may have been so, it was as the slayer of the Drought-Demon, whatever the latter's proper designation might have been, even if it was not Apaosha originally, that Indra began his career as a god when the Aryans whom he later led as *vṛtraghṇa* (in the correct sense) were still grass-land nomads. Indra, as stated, with Varuṇa,

[14] Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 98-103 ; RV. IV. 17 ; VI. 18, 25-30.

Mitra and the Nāsatyas, was known in the Mitanni country, which lay much further west than Media, as far back at least as the middle of the Second Millennium B. C., and if the Magians (who, I have found, were a very early immigration into Iran of an Aryan people)[15] did not bring these Gods with them from the grass-lands, they had opportunities to make their acquaintance, from report at any rate, as far back as the Second Millennium B. C. But the probabilities are that they did not need to have taken over Indra second-hand from another Aryan people like the rulers of the Mitanni. The Magians are found from the Avesta to have been not only familiar with the term "Verethraghna" in the sense of "assault-repelling," their Genius of Victory had a place in their pantheon under this very name. In the Bahram Yasht, this God of Victory is said to have incarnated himself in the material world in as many as ten *avatārs*; and I should have expected that the first *avatār* would have been named in the Yasht as Indra, for Indra had to assume this character in the interest of his worshippers by the time at least that they had arrived and found settled homes amongst alien peoples in Iran. This, even leaving the Magians out of account, the Aryans must have done by the beginning of the Second Millennium B. C. at the latest.

[15] See *post*, paragraphs 173 ff., 183.

Yet it is Bād (the Magians' pre-Vāyu Wind-god, see Appendix B *post*, paras. 307-09) who figures in the Yasht as the first incarnation, and Indra is nowhere in the sequence.

63. Nevertheless I cannot avoid concluding that Indra *propria persona* was the first incarnation, that is to say, the original Verethraghna, in the pre-Yasht Magian theosophy ; and I strongly suspect that Indra, worshipped as Verethraghna by the Magians themselves from the time of their settlement in Iran, was deliberately replaced in the Yasht by Bād in post-Zoroastrian times.[16]

64. Post-Zoroastrian Magianism at least cannot be blamed for finding in Indra the typical intemperate, head-strong, wine-swilling Daeva, the procurator *par excellence* of Anghra Mainyu (later Ahriman, the Magian Satan). And he, with the Nāsatyas, is in fact found incontinently consigned to hell on that ground by the Vendidad. (Fergard, X.9 ; XIX.43). So, again, in the post-Zoroastrian version of the Drought-Demon myth (which Darmesteter quite justifiably considers to have been a late refacimento of the Thraetona-Azhi Dahaka myth, to be presently considered)[17] there are reasons for suspecting that the objectionable

[16] Zoroaster, it is generally agreed, flourished between 660 and 583 B. C. See note (90) *post*.

[17] For detailed treatment of Tishtrya and Verethraghna, see Appendix B, paras. 287-88, 301-06, *post*.

Indra was in the same way deliberately replaced by the (from the Magian point of view) highly presentable "Regent Star" Tishtrya (Sirius). Indra, these considerations lead me to hold, was the one and only incontestable Verethraghna (God of Victory) in Iran up to the time when the ancestors of the Āryas left that country under his leadership for the Land of the Five Rivers and for many centuries after that event.

65. Even so, Indra had rivals to settle with in his character of the Thunder-god as such before he came to lead the Vedic Aryans to the Land of the Five Rivers. There were Parjanya, Trita Āptya and Brahmaṇaspati. Parjanya survived in the Vedic hymns, more however as a grass-land reminiscence than as a live divinity, as the god at the same time of thunder, lightning, clouds and rains, so that he did not have to fight and overcome any opposition offered to him and his worshippers by any Drought-Demon screened from him by the adversely disposed clouds. The fine poetry of the Parjanya hymns, collected in Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, Sec. vii, must be taken to have been the gift of a tribe of grass-land nomads who knew Parjanya and not Indra for their Thunder and Rain-god, with whom the worshippers of Indra had amalgamated probably when both tribes were yet grass-land nomads. In the Land of the Five Rivers, Indra does not actually expel but simply overshadows Parjanya and relegates him to

a back seat, much in the same way as in his leader's character he appears to have put himself in front of the more truly divine *asura* and *samrāt* Varuṇa. RV. IX.82.3 and 113.3, it is interesting to observe, take special note of Parjanya's services as the nourisher of Soma, the invigorator in his turn of Indra.

66. I feel greatly attracted by Darmesteter's speculation equating Trita Āptya (who he says is also named Tritana in the Vedas ; this name occurs in RV. I.158.4) with Thraetona Āthwaya of the Avesta (see 4 Sacred Books of the East, p. lxiii), whose opponent again in the Avesta is the cloud-serpent Azhi, an equivalent of the Ahi who appears as an opponent of the same character of Indra in the Vedic hymns. I feel inclined to agree also with Darmesteter's derivation of Āptya from 'Ap' (water, *Cf.* Apām Napāt, a figure occurring in both the Vedas, as in RV.II.35, and the Avesta, whom he takes to have been originally a personification of the lightning fire born from the waters of the clouds, see RV.IV.1.12). Indra must in the end have overcome Trita Āptya, for though he too figures at places in the Vedic hymns as the confounder of demons in association with the Maruts, Vāyu and Indra, sins and evils which have to be wished away come to be wished away to him[18] (see Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V. p. 336).

18 Trita is credited in the Rig-Veda (VIII.47.13 ff.) with having also been a healing god. Was this wishing

67. Brahmaṇaspati, the remaining Thunder-god of the Rig-Vedic hymns, will come up for special treatment later on. All that I need say about him in the present context is that, according to RV.I.105.17, Brahmaṇaspati came to the relief of one Trita who had fallen into a well, and saved him. If this Trita was Trita Āptya, and the imprisoning walls were formed out of clouds (a very apt interpretation), does this text signify a losing alliance between this other Thunder-god and this other Slayer of the Drought-Demon against Vṛtrahan Indra who finally got the better of both, in both these capacities, so that Brahmaṇaspati survived only by specialising in a different direction? Trita's frenzied prayers for succour, attended to by Brahmaṇaspati, does end in a general acknowledgment of Indra's leadership in verse 19 following.

68. I reserve detailed consideration of the Tishtrya-Apaosha myth, and its relations with the Indra-Vṛtra myth, till I come to deal with the Tishtrya (Tir) Yasht in Appendix B (*post*, paras. 287-88).

69. Indra grows in importance and stature both as the *vṛtraghna* winner of victory against

away to him of evils and sins possibly meant for a compliment to his healing powers? RV. XIII. 47, 14-16 wishes sleeplessness even away to him. Even so, Trita would not be much of a figure standing alongside of Indra,

enemies and as the Vṛtraghna slayer of the Drought-Demon in the political and geographical environment of the Panjab. As the former, he leads the Āryas to victory against the Dasyus, and as the latter, he strives mightily and in the end successfully every year against the drought which precedes the breaking of the monsoons. The monsoons in the Panjab, it is well to bear in mind in this connection, do cause a disproportionate amount of disturbance, for the tangible results in which all the noise and fury finally issue. In the eastern river valleys where the monsoons do not usually need to be bullied and coaxed into action as in the Panjab, and where the political conditions showed a reversion to the imperial conditions which had made Varuṇa into an *asura* and a *samrāt* in the table-land of Iran, Indra after narrowly escaping ouster by a restored Varuṇa, in the end, gets himself solemnly crowned as the King of the Heavens and by easy gradations sinks finally into a royal voluptuary.[19] The gods yield and respond to the environment as decisively and distinctly as do their worshippers.

[19] See the author's "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)," pp. 62-63. It is very noteworthy that in the Mahābhiṣeka ceremony at which, according to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, Indra found himself installed as the Ruler of the gods, the *mantra* requisitioned for the purpose was the one in RV.I. 25.10 which bore on the acquisition of universal rule by Varuṇa. In other Upaniṣad

70. It was the unpropitious monsoon conditions of the Land of the Five Rivers which stood in the way of the worshippers of Indra getting thoroughly depastoralised and of Indra himself becoming an agriculturists' deity in the Vedic Aryan times. Passable agriculturists as the Vedic Aryans had come to be already, the fact that they still continued to invoke Indra to give them first and foremost, horses, cattle, chariots, health and understanding shows the extent of the pastoral nomads' outlook which still remained ingrained in them even in this new environment.

71. Indra had several subordinates associated with him of whom one was Vāyu, known also in the Avesta in two distinct impersonations as Bād and Vāyu (as to which, see Appendix B, *post*, paras. 307-09). He must have been a god as old as his principal, and contemporary by the same token of Pūṣan and Soma (for the texts,

texts, Indra is seen diligently taking lessons in *ātmavidyā* from Brahmā himself (Chhand. Up. VIII. 7-12). These were highly interesting experiments aimed at adapting the Vedic Aryan host-leader-god of the Āryas to the entirely uncongenial physical and social environment of the Eastern Gangetic valley.

The difference in the behaviour of the monsoons in the Panjab and in the Eastern Gangetic valley appears to have been more marked in those days than they are at the present time. The Mahābhārata in Sabhāparva, 21.10, professes to record how this difference impressed Kṛṣṇa.

see Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 143-46). Indra's association with Vāyu can present no difficulty of understanding, seeing that they represented complementary powers and operations of nature. Quite obviously again, this god of the Tempests occupied a position of subordination in relation to the god of Thunder and Lightning. The association of Indra with Viṣṇu and the Maruts, on the other hand, appears to have been not natural, but a matter of historical evolution.

72. Viṣṇu's natural leadership of the Maruts is scarcely open to question upon the texts of the Vedic hymns; and it is seen to have lingered on in tradition to so late a date as the age of the Śrauta Sūtras (see Baudh. Śr. S. XVIII. 26). Equally plain is the reluctance with which they appear in the Vedic texts to be submitting to Indra's orders and directions.[20] Viṣṇu's own position amongst the deities of the Vedic Aryan pantheon does not appear to me to have been the subordinate one which Dr. Muir has assigned to him in Chapter II of Vol. IV of the Sanskrit Texts, and this in the face even of the fact that he is nowhere in the texts specifically named as an Āditya. RV. I.155 and RV. I.156 contain

[20] See Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 153-54. The Baudhāyana text cited is significant also of the admission *from outside* of Viṣṇu and the Maruts into the Vedic pantheon. For the text, see author's "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)," pp. 222-23.

clear indications that Indra and Viṣṇu starting as rivals ended by becoming associates ; that Viṣṇu's position in the beginning was even superior to Indra's and that this superiority wore off in proportion as Indra, owing to changing circumstances, progressively rose in importance. Even so, Viṣṇu does not appear from the texts to have ever come to occupy a position of subordination, in relation to Indra, such as belonged to Vāyu.

73. There are, to my mind, reasonable grounds for supposing that Viṣṇu with his troop of Maruts (spoken of in the texts also as the Rudras [21]) became

[21] In the hymns, the Maruts (Rudras) are variously described as the sons of Rudra and Pṛsnī, and again as the sons of the sky and ocean. RV.V. 52.16 suggests that the Maruts were originally conceived as a nondescript crowd, and parents were later found for them by the Ṛṣis. It is noticeable that the picture of Rudra drawn in the hymns continued to the end to be lacking in definition, in a similar manner to that of Aditi. . Rudra might not inconceivably have been a Storm-god of some amalgamating tribe, who got put out of commission by Vāyu. Sāyaṇa commenting on RV. V. 56·8 actually equates Rudra with Vāyu, but apparently on this one occasion only. RV. I. 43 and 114, it should however be noted, leave it in doubt as to whether Rudra was feared and propitiated as the bringer-on of epidemic diseases and like evils amongst men and beasts, or was invoked as the healer of them after they had come. They seem to suggest his evolution in a sinister, though entirely necessary, direction in the environment of the Indian

associates of Indra and Vāyu through a coalescence of tribes which took place before occasion arose for them to depart from their grass-land environment.

74. Gods obviously of the Tempests, the Maruts are conceived as highly wrought up, yet benevolent (not certainly demoniacal) deities, for they are specifically credited with healing powers. It is the irradiating lightning in their composition, rather than their explosiveness, which has contributed to the physical picture drawn of them in the texts. They are fiery, golden, tawny and have golden limbs, arms, ornaments and equipments. Their leader Viṣṇu shares with almost every other Vedic impersonation of Light, in every one of its forms (not excluding the Maruts themselves, as to whom see RV. VIII. 83. 9-10), the power of "taking vast strides," and of "stretching the world out" for the accommodation of created beings (RV.VI. 69. 5, RV. VII. 99).[22] But Viṣṇu is specially distinguished from those

river valleys. His healing remedies (*bheṣaja*) appear to have been a late after-thought. The arrows he shot from his bow carried death and disease wherever they might chance to find lodgment. See RV. VIII. 92·5. *Cf.* similar development in the case of the Greek Apollo.

22 To Light the Vedic hymns repeatedly attribute the power of keeping the Earth and Firmament apart and stretching out the Sky as a canopy over the Earth, in the result "supporting both." The Avestan Bundahis has a

others as "the God of the three strides" and by the fact that his third "stride" leads him on to where the others cannot go, to a third region beyond the Earth and beyond the Firmament, a region which RV. I. 155 specially declares to be unattainable by any but Viṣṇu. This region is the special abode of Viṣṇu where according to some of his worshippers, "men devoted to the gods rejoice," regaling from the spring of honey which this benevolent god has specially provided for their delectation (RV. I. 154. 5; also RV. III. 55.5; *cf.* RV. IX. 113, particularly verse 9). The fact however that other worshippers pray "to be preserved from" this very region (RV. I. 22. 16), and that a sincerer preference is shown for that lower region shared by Indra and Viṣṇu together, "where the many-horned and swiftly moving cows (clouds) abide" (RV. I. 154. 6),

fine passage showing that this extraordinarily subtle idea had been conveyed to and kept alive in Media till Persian times by the very earliest Aryan immigrants, the Magians. In Ch. XXX, 5 (the Resurrection Chapter), the Bundahis makes Ahura say: "Through me, the sky arose from the substance of this ruby without columns on the spiritual support of far-compassed Light;" and, the Earth being stated to have been created thereafter, "there was," Ahura adds, "as yet no other maintainer of the earthly creation besides Light." (5 Sacred Books of the East, pp. 121-22.) The Reader will not fail to note the modern scientific ring of the idea.

points to this third region having been what Viṣṇu's worshippers had came to conceive as the last abiding place of the souls of the departed, the dread domain to which Pūṣan would lead them after death, and having left them there return to attend to his living worshippers.

75. What specific physical entity or entities or phenomena first gave rise to the conception of this deity it is not easy to determine. But this is a difficulty which attends the conception of quite a number of other Vedic gods. Pūṣan, the Aśvins and Mitrā-Varuṇa were equally elusive nature deities.

76. Co-ordinating all the relevant texts from the hymns, one is led to conclude that Viṣṇu was *par excellence* a god of Light in all its manifestations in the upper regions, but the god of Light who disclosed himself to his worshippers most obviously and powerfully in the form of Lightning. It was as the god of Lightning that he had the Maruts for attendants, and so attended, he was certainly equipped in every way to be a serious rival of Indra in the latter's own special domain, the atmosphere.

77. The conclusion I have arrived at is that Viṣṇu was a deity of the highest importance amongst a tribe of grass-land nomads to whom Indra and Vāyu were unknown ; that he with the Maruts performed for them the same amongst other

functions which Indra and Vāyu discharged for the benefit of their worshippers ; and that the admission of Viṣṇu and the Maruts into the Vedic Aryan pantheon was due to a coalescence of their respective worshippers, who formerly belonged to different tribes, into one amalgamated tribe. The manner in which the synthesis was effected can, with reasonable assurance, be gathered from the texts of RV. I. 156. He is here invoked at the same time as an ancient and a recent god. "King Varuṇa and the Aśvins have," it is said, "done homage to the power of this ruler," that he, attended by the Maruts, opens up the clouds, and that "himself more beneficent, this wise god hastens to support Indra for the gratification of the Ārya."

78. It was the amalgamated tribe's necessity to find a proper host-leader to fight their battles and win for them a home in foreign lands that thus finally fixed Viṣṇu's place as colleague and coadjutor of Indra. Viṣṇu, a superior conception, was gradually pushed into the background for the same reason and in very much the same manner as Varuṇa. The reluctant submission of the Maruts to Indra (see RV. I. 165, 170, 171) necessarily followed this re-adjustment of position between Indra and their leader, the admittedly subordinate position held under Indra by Vāyu who, being a single impersonation of the forces which they appeared to represent as a *gaṇa* or crowd (RV. V.

55.3, 59.6,7 ; 60.5), now easily became the Chief of the Maruts,[23] facilitating the process.

79. In view of the foregoing, I feel constrained to correct the statement I had occasion to make, at p. 64 of my book on "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)" that the name Viṣṇu belonged to a "quite minor" Aryan Deity. He clearly held a very high and honoured place in the Vedic pantheon to start with, and never fell so low as to be ranked as a minor deity, and the Paurāṇists' choice of his name for the great personal god of that name of later days was by no means as arbitrarily conceived as I had there suggested. But the Viṣṇu of the hymns was no more a personal god than was Varuṇa before he had opportunities to borrow the attributes of an "*asura*" from his temporary association with Assur in Media, as will be shown later.

80. The Vedic Aryan gods, those that is to say, whom their worshippers brought with them from the grass-lands, were all without exception nature-deities, though some of them for one reason or another were able to pick up some distinctly personal attributes. Their worshippers were decidedly no doctrine-mongering theosophists ; their mental

23 RV. I. 134. 4, 142. 12. See Muir's observations on these texts, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 144-45. Vāyu as Vāta (*cf.* Avestan Bād) has the same healing properties as Rudra and the Maruts. *Ibid*, p. 146.

attitude was quite unmistakably pagan, and in a very happy, healthy and contented way, so far as we can gather from the texts of the older strata of hymns in the Rigveda. But quite as unmistakably they were no crude animists. The search in every instance for a definitely identifiable physical object or entity to answer for each of their nature deities has been due to the mistaken assumption that the Vedic Aryans were and must have been "animists." Their very peculiar environment made them lively poets of nature, and also extraordinarily (but not extravagantly) subtle poets. The Vedic Ṛṣis, naturally and spontaneously, through mutual reactions between a happy and healthily constituted organism and a (poetically speaking) highly refined physical environment, were what but few modern poets only can make of themselves by exceptional efforts of abstraction. Pūṣan, the Aśvins, and Mitrā-Varuṇa were and must have been from the very outset subtly conceived deities, but nature-deities they still were, all the same. So was Viṣṇu. So came to be Agni, though he might have started as the personification only of the sacrificial fire, as we shall presently see.

81. The Rigveda makes Vāyu a son-in-law of Tvaṣṭṛ (RV. VIII.26. 21). But he is by no means Tvaṣṭṛ's only son-in-law, for Vivasvat is another to whom he gives in marriage his daughter Saraṇyū by whom Vivasvat has the Aśvin-twins for sons. But

Vivasvat is also the father, by his "wedded wife," of the other twins, Yama and Yamī (RV. X. 17. 1, 2). Vivasvat, according to the Nirukta again (XII. 10 ff.), is father of Manu by his *savarṇā* wife (of the same tribe, that is to say, hence Sāvarṇi), which (discarding the Io-like Saraṇyū legend which later was evolved to account for the Aśvins getting their "horsy" name) I take to imply that Saraṇyū was not regarded as a *savarṇā* wife of Vivasvat. I suspected as much. I suspect all relations by marriage or adoption amongst the gods of the Rigveda. They betoken attempts to make one family of gods belonging by birth to two or more originally different tribes or peoples (not always all of the grass-land nomad variety) who coalesced or at least intimately fraternised with each other as neighbours or fellow-subjects for a period sufficiently long and in sufficiently close proximity to induce syncretism of beliefs and traditions. This will appear more clearly as we proceed with our examination.

(c) *Tvaṣṭṛ, Brahmaṇaspati and the Ṛbhus.*

82. Tvaṣṭṛ is decidedly a non-nomad god. He is not a nature-god at all. He represents the creator (artificer) idea, the god of the artisans and metal-workers. (See RV. I. 32.2, 85.9; X. 48.3; X. 53.9, among other verses.)

83. Agriculture appears to have been closely associated with the industries from very remote

times, and neither could have made any appreciable progress without metallurgy to aid it. But all agricultural countries have not had the same potentialities for the development of metallurgy in the same degree. In countries poor in metals, the primitive smiths would either be visiting foreigners, or if settled, a caste by themselves, and as such as much to be respected as feared by the local agriculturists and craftsmen. But metallurgy appears to have been a native industry in many parts, and these appear to have included Egypt, Syria, Assyria, North Persia and also Anatolia, to speak only of the countries which bordered on the two nomad fronts, the Semitic and the Aryan. Prof. (now Sir) G. Elliot Smith in his article on Anthropology, in the 12th Edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, credits Northern Persia with the invention of bronze at some time between 2500 and 2000 B.C. The Vedic Aryans, if he is right, need not therefore have gone very far afield westward to have come across Tvastṛ. And as other data go to show that they must have come into contact with the Magians and to have lived alongside of them within the peace of the same sovereign rulers, without having actually amalgamated and become one people with them, Tvastṛ, it is fair to presume, was picked up near Meshed in Northern Persia, where Sir George Elliot Smith is inclined to locate the domicile of the first bronze-workers.

84. Tvaṣṭṛ appears from the Rigveda to have met with the same reception from the Vedic Aryans and their gods as visiting or immigrant smiths are known from traditions (too scattered and widespread a phenomenon to have been sporadic in every case) to have received from agriculturists not directly acquainted with metallurgy. He appears to have entered the Vedic Aryan pantheon through the favour of divinities *de jure* within it who were good enough to take his *asavarṇā* daughters to wife (who these gods were I have already mentioned, but Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 227-29, give all the interesting details in full) ; and Indra, it further appears, was distinctly hostile to him and his son, Viśvarūpa (*ibid*, pp. 229-33; RV. X. 8-9). But the Vedic Aryan nomads from the North had become far too settled and civilized a people to ignore or do without him. His marvellous skill and intelligence appears indeed from other indications to have as good as hypnotised them. It was of course quite natural to credit him with sharpening the iron-axe of his kin, the Thunder-god Brahmaṇaspati or Bṛhaspati (of whom presently); but the hymns make him forge Indra's thunderbolt (sometimes spoken of as made of iron and sometimes as of gold) also for him (RV. I. 32.2, X. 53.9, 48.3 ; etc.) ; and end finally by proclaiming him to have been the creator of the world and the archetype of all forms, so that he it was who gave form to all things, earth

and heaven included (RV.I.13.10 ; III. 55.19, etc.). Some seers had the subtlety to see in him the vivifier and germinator even of all forms of life. He is spoken of as the creator in particular of Brahmaṇaspati who in his turn is said to have "blown forth the birth of the gods like a blacksmith ;" and as the generator also of Agni, the Fire-god. But setting divinity aside, the smith and the smelter without question invariably generate the fire of their forge. (Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 224-27.) It is observable that the epithet *viśvarūpa*, found to be specially appropriate for Tvaṣṭṛ, Brahmaṇaspati and Agni, belonged to Tvaṣṭṛ's son as his proper name, RV. X. 8-9.

85. The Xth Maṇḍala of the Rigveda, in Sūktas 81 and 82, envisages a Viśvakarman. Tvaṣṭṛ and Viśvakarman become indistinguishable in the Purāṇas. The god of the iron axe of RV. VIII. 29.3, it may be incidentally mentioned, is Brahmaṇaspati, not Tvaṣṭṛ with whom he is identified by Sāyana.

86. Sir J. G. Frazer has found the axe to have been an emblem of the Hittite Thunder-god ; and Brahmaṇaspati has not only the axe (*paraśu*) but he splits the clouds open too with it to cause rain. Indra's *vajra*, on the other hand, is not an axe, and is four-angled when it is most moderately pictured, and is even thousand-angled at other times. Though essentially a Thunder-god, the Vedic seers

are nevertheless seen to equate Brahmaṇaspati, when the spirit moves them to do so, with Agni rather than with Indra ; and, as already stated, though he is said to have been generated by Tvastṛ, he it was who "blew forth the birth of the gods," Tvastṛ inclusive, "like a blacksmith." The authors of the Rigveda did not obviously find their task of correlating Tvastṛ and Brahmaṇaspati with the gods of their daily prayers cut out for them. This and their association with the forge, fire and iron make it reasonable to infer that Tvastṛ and Brahmaṇaspati (Bṛhaspati), and the Ṛbhus also, were originally strangers to the Vedic Aryan pantheon, whom it acquired in the neighbourhood of Media. The Ṛbhus, the hymns repeatedly attest, had been rewarded with a place amongst the gods for services rendered *as artisans and workers* to them and to their worshippers. RV.I.20.6, 161.1-5.

(*d*) *Agni.*

87. Agni must have belonged from the very outset to the nomads who owned Pūṣan, Soma and Indra. But he, like Indra, evolved and expanded and took on new attributes with the passage of time and the progress of the nomads southward.

88. He did not begin as the hearth-fire, naturally, because the nomads had no hearths yet and no notion of one. But they already were fervent

worshippers of their gods, and Agni was indispensable for the purpose of carrying messages to those same gods (who resided mostly in the high heavens) from their worshippers (penned as these were like their cattle upon the earth). Not that he was on that account to be thought of as a sort of sacerdotal Hermes, for he was not only the chosen messenger of the gods to bring them tidings of sacrifices offered by men, he was conceived of at the same time as the divine priest and the director and protector of all sacred ceremonies. He therefore in a manner presided over the sacrifices to which he summoned the gods on behalf of the worshippers, and as a god himself shared in the adorations and the oblations as a party principal. Agni appeared indeed to the Vedic seers as "the mouth and tongue through which both gods and men participated in the sacrifices" (the Texts, too numerous for detailed reference, will be found collected in Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 199-202). The author of RV. X. 51 even pictured to himself the predicament the gods were in when once Agni hid himself, that is to say, struck work, thereby proving to demonstration why Agni was not to be treated simply as a go-between messenger but as a god sharing in the sacrifices and adorations.

89. And the Ṛṣis stint him neither in their adorations. Far from it. No Vedic god appears to stir the worshipper up to more diversified poetical

efforts and none is hymned with the zest and joyousness which scintillate through every reference to this god. " Father, king, ruler and banner of the sacrifices," the multi-coloured epithets which are fashioned to portray his physical characteristics appear as though thrown off from the forge of the divine artificer himself (for the texts, see Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 211-13).[24]

90. When Indra, the Thunder-god, evolved into host-leader of the Āryas at the time the latter started upon their southward trek to an unknown destination, Agni as naturally became his associate and coadjutor in this adventurous enterprise, for it was through sacrifices that, according to Vedic Aryan notions, both the Aryans and their gods were strengthened for all mighty undertakings.[25] They proceeded on their victorious march, the twin *vṛtraghṇas*, the twin shakers of cities, the twin patron gods of the Āryas, followed all the way, aided and inspirited by the presiding deity of the immortalising plant, Soma, the one other deity who shares in Indra's and Agni's special guardianship of the destinies of the Āryas. In this new personation he is invoked to lead the van in battles

[24] Amongst Dr. Muir's fine collections of epithets and characteristics of the Vedic gods, this collection of Agni's epithets is easily the finest.

[25] This is a commonplace also of the Avestan Yashts, as will be seen later.

and consume the enemies like dry bushes (RV. VIII. 43. 21, 73. 8; IV. 4. 4; Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 219, 220, 267).

91. So soon as the Āryas settle down in their new homes as agriculturists, Agni, besides being and remaining the sacrificial fire, became the hearth-fire also. Here he began to be viewed variously as *gṛhapati* (lord of the house) and again as a brilliant guest. "Father," "mother," "brother," "son," "kinsman," "friend," there was no possible relationship of intimacy, through which the householder was not able to visualise him. (For texts, see Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 203-04.)

92. The nomad, turned householder, speculated on the manifold origins and varied manifestations of this deity in ways inconceivable by the pure-bred nomad or by the pure-bred agriculturist. He has been generated by Tvaṣṭṛ, by the Dawn, by the Waters, by Indra, by Viṣṇu (RV. I.95.2; II. 12.3; VII. 78. 3, 99.4; X.2, 7, 91.6). All the fires one sees appear in relation to him like the branches of a single tree (RV. VII. 1. 14; VIII. 19. 33). He is traced to his several abodes in the three worlds, into the very bowels of the earth and inside living organisms (RV. III. 55; X. 88.5). The fire-stick has him in embryo (RV.VIII.23.25) and as soon as he is born, strange offspring, he begins devouring his own parent! (RV.X.79.4). Soon he is observed

wriggling about as a brood of serpents, to flame up anon, tawny-haired, thousand-eyed, thousand-horned, till he becomes *viśvād* (all-devouring, RV.VIII.44.26), invades the forests, shearing the hair off from the earth (RV. I. 65. 4) and roaring like the waves of the sea (RV. I. 44. 12; Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 208-13). Up above, he is beheld borne aloft upon a chariot of lightnings (RV.III.14.1).

93. When the spirit is upon him, the seer sees him in the grandest of cosmic proportions. He produces the two worlds and stretches them out like two skins [see note (22) *supra*]. He causes the sun to ascend the sky, forms the luminaries and adorns the heavens with the stars. He has not only animated but has even made all that flies or walks or stands or moves. It is through him that Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman triumph. They and the Maruts and all the 3,339 gods worship him. All the gods are comprehended in him; he surrounds them all as the circumference of a wheel surrounds the spokes. Sages call that one god who is Agni by a variety of names such as Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Yama, Matariśvan, Aryaman, Ansa, Tvastṛ, Rudra, Pūṣan, Savitṛ, Bhaga, even Aditi, Hotrā, Bhāratī, Ilā, Sarasvatī, *ad hoc genus omne.* He knows and sees all the worlds and creatures. He knows the recesses of heaven, the divine ordinances, the races or births of gods and men and the secrets of mortals. He

is *asura* (divine spirit). The gods make him, as they had made Pūṣan and Soma, the centre-point of immortality (Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 214-19). [The designation, *amṛtasya nābhi* has also been applied to the milch-cow, RV. VIII. 101.15.]

94. In the changed environment of torrid India, he undergoes a transformation very much to his and his worshippers' credit. They discover his purifying properties ; and to the same extent that cooked food begins to prevail over food taken raw, cooked offerings eclipse other forms. Agni is no longer the bare carrier to the gods of tidings of sacrifices offered by men ; he purges and purifies the offerings of all gross matter by his heat (*tapas*) so as to make them fit food for the *divyas* (RV. I. 95.11, 96.9, 97; VI. 15.7).

95. The idea leads finally to the supersession of burial by cremation in the disposal of the dead.

96. I find it hard to presume that the pure-bred nomad either buried or burnt his dead or felt any need for appeasing their spirits. Moving tribes of nomads could have had as little sentiment concerning their dead as armies on the march ; and the dead members of the tribe probably received the same treatment as their dead (not sacrificed) cattle, and both were presumably left behind to be disposed of by nature's own scavengers. I cannot therefore avoid the reflection

that the *dakhma* of the Magians and the Parsis have been a survival of very orthodox Proto-Aryan practice. The souls of the dead must have been even less of a trouble to the Proto-Aryan than their bodies. Pūṣan was there to take them to where they were to go and Pūṣan could surely be trusted to do it to the best advantage ; they themselves and their cattle, meanwhile, must move on to new pastures under the same god's guidance. The dead became a sanitary and a spiritual problem, at one and the same time, as soon as the moving nomad settled down in a fixed home.

97. Even the *dakhma* which bears a more conservative appearance than burial or cremation, was not just throwing the corpses anyhow and anywhere. It has been associated with a variety of rites and ceremonies for safeguarding the released souls. The ancestor-spirits, I shall show later on, proved even more of a pre-occupation to the Magian than to the Vedic Aryan householder; and also that the Vedic Aryans' *pitṛs* were an early, and presumably a somewhat pale prefigurement of the not yet fully developed Magian *fravashis*.

98. To the unsophisticated savages, interment naturally suggests itself as providing the safest and at the same time the most convenient accommodation for the body and soul of the dead, and the Magians must have been too conservative, and

too soon sophisticated at the same time, to have evolved the *dakhma* out of what I conceive to have been the orthodox Proto-Aryan practice. The purifying potentialities of fire opened out to the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans (possibly for the first time in the Land of the Five Rivers) another method which was simpler and less onerous than *dakhma* and which has proved sanitarily superior to both the *dakhma* and the burial customs.

99. The Vedic Aryans unhesitatingly consigned even their dead to Agni[26] in the expectation that he would consume and return to the elements the "born" part of the deceased worshipper and revitalise the immortal parts of him to be taken to the *pitṛs* (RV.X.16; AV.VI.120, XII.2.45; XVIII.3.71; XVIII.4.9).

100. In all this description which does not seem to miss a single important detail, one looks in vain to discover the sanctification of any of the industrial uses of fire. Tvastṛ even is not so exclusively connected with the fire and the forge as to admit of his being equated with the Haephestos of the Greeks, not to speak of Agni's. The Vedic Aryans' Fire-god proper had nothing whatever to do with the forge.

[26] The Magians would consign the dead neither to fire nor to the earth, as, in their estimation, it was heinously sinful to contaminate these sacred elements by contact with corpses, which they had come to regard as an abomination.

101. The Avestan Atar (fire) is an inconsiderably pale flame by the side of the Vedic Aryan Agni as delineated in the Rigveda. The Bundahis, Magian-like, conscientiously catalogues the several manifestations of this fire as follows: First, there was the fire inside plants and animals. Secondly, the fire which served the utilitarian purposes of men. Thirdly, fire found as lightning in the clouds; and, lastly, the sacred fire kept in places of sacrifice. The Magian never discovered the purifier in his "touch-me-not" Fire-deity. To him the waters above were all-sufficient for that purpose. The departed spirits in the Avesta had however to pass the test of "the molten metal," before being taken to Heaven or Hell by the sure indications of this test. Here the molten metal (not fire) functioned not as the purifier but as the detective or judge. The dead underwent not purification but an ordeal test through it.

102. The Magians and the Parsis have been erroneously labelled as "Fire-worshippers." This element, truly, has known no more devoted and enthusiastic worshippers than the Vedic Aryans.

(*e*) *Savitṛ and Sūrya.*

103. There are two Vedic Aryan deities who can be distinctly related to the Sun, Savitṛ and Sūrya. Neither Pūṣan, nor Varuṇa, nor Mitra are distinctively Sun-gods, and one can hardly

make anything of Aryaman who appears as a healing spirit in the Avesta, and whom, as well as Pūṣan, the Lexicons now readily identify with the Sun. Etymologically, Vivasvat would have a better claim to such identification, if every other indication afforded by the Vedas and the Avesta did not point in the contrary direction.[27] In the Avesta, Yima is the son of Vivahvant, and the brother, according to the Bundahis, of a sister Yimaka ; the Vivasvat of the Vedas also is father of a brother and a sister bearing the names, Yama and Yamī, who were twins. Later Indian legend makes Vivasvat father also of Manu Vaivasvat who is more of kin to the Avestan Yima than to the Vedic Aryan Yama. I shall hereafter[28] adduce reasons for concluding that Yama, in character, if not in name, did not belong originally to any Proto-Aryan nomad tribe, so long at least as it stayed nomad ; nor obviously did Yima. Yama and Yima both appear by birth and association to have belonged to some settled agricultural community. If so, Vivasvat (Vivahvant) too must have belonged or at any

[27] It was very probably a name for the Sky, like Dyaus ; so that foisting him on the Aśvins as their father might not have appeared such a solecism at the time the occurrence took place as it does now when the meaning has become doubtful. The Aśvins are spoken of as *divo napāt* (son of the Sky) in RV. X. 61.4.

[28] See paragraphs 187 ff. *post*.

rate had been assimilated to the traditions of such a community. The Tvastṛ-Vivasvat-Yama-Aśvins-Manu tangle is indeed hard to unravel, without taking into account Pūṣan's adoption of the Aśvins as his parents, but that it was a tangle betokening multilateral syncretism can scarcely admit of doubt. The Aśvins who must have been Proto-Aryan deities appear to have somehow served as the handles whereby a number of foreign deities of agricultural and industrial affinities, amongst others, were drawn into the Vedic Aryan pantheon, in the interest no doubt, and for the benefit, of the Vedic Aryans. Paired gods were such a familiar feature of the Vedic theogony, that I have seen no use in appealing for light to the Dioscuri analogy.

104. Savitṛ is a benigner and more golden-hued manifestation of the Sun-god than Sūrya. He is *hiraṇyākṣa* (golden-eyed), *hiraṇyapāṇi* or *hiraṇya-hasta* (golden-handed) and *hiraṇya-jihva* (golden-tongued), RV. I. 22.5, 35.8 ; VI. 71.3 ; etc. He awakens, vivifies, nourishes (he is *puṣā* in RV. V. 81.2). So far from striking down and scorching, he enlivens and even heals. He is the Sun-god of a temperate clime such as the grass-land nomad habitually experiences. He stands head and shoulders above Sūrya in moral eminence which in his case is such as to bring him into close proximity with Mitrā-Varuṇa. He is *asura* (a divine spirit, RV. I. 35.7, 10 ; IV. 53.1). He is *svarāt*

and his independent authority as such cannot be lessened by Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra and Aryaman, Rudra or any other gods (RV. II. 38.7, 9; V. 82.2). He is lord of all creatures and supports the sky and the world. He observes fixed laws (RV. IV. 53.2, 4). The other gods are said to follow his lead (RV. V. 81.3), and the winds and waters obey his ordinances (II. 38.2), which is a very shrewd anticipation of modern climatology. For steady pursuit of his round of duties, the Solar deity is indeed without rival. He must already have been the great time-keeper for the gods and men even in the grass-land nomad environment (Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 162-64).

105. Compared with Savitṛ, Sūrya is distinctly an inferior divinity. His function is simply to awaken men and set them to work; and so far from being a maker of ordinances for the other gods to follow, he has his path prepared by the Ādityas, Mitra, Aryaman and Varuṇa, if not by Pūṣan also (RV. I. 24.8, VI. 58.3, VII. 60.4), and he appears to have served rather as the eye and spy and agent of the greater gods, namely, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni (see RV. I. 50.2, 7, etc., and other texts in Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 155-660). Sūrya, I conceive, was the Sun-god of some tribe, an agricultural tribe presumably, located well within the tropics, with whom the worshippers of Pūṣan, Indra, Agni, Soma and Savitṛ amalgamated and who would not allow

their Sun-god to be merged in or superseded by Savitṛ. The passage in RV. VIII. 90.12, in which he is spoken of *inter alia* as the *purohita* (leader) of the "*asuras*" occurs in a context of self-evident devotional hyperbole. Sūrya's being spoken of as the lover or husband of Uṣas, the Dawn-Goddess, in RV. VII. 75.5, appears to have been no less a poetic figure than the other passage in RV. VIII. 78.3, in which she is said to have generated him. But we have seen his daughter Sūryā being given in marriage, now to Pūṣan and again to Soma, to be snapped up finally by the Aśvins. All this is distinctly indicative of the foreign origin of this family.

106. As he neither generates nor nourishes, he must have been Sun-god in a locality which owed its fertility to either the flood-waters of rivers or precipitations from the clouds, conditions to be found in riverine regions and in the monsoon countries chiefly. The name "Sūrya" is said to be Aryan. But one cannot by any means be sure about it. The derivation of Sūrya from a properly significant Aryan root may prove to be as illusory as that of the term "*asura.*" It does not for all that seem probable that Sūrya was picked up for the first time in the Panjab. He appears to have been collected in Iran. The Avestan Sun-god of the Khorshed Yasht (Yasht VI) at any rate is equally if not more undistinguished. A tribe who already possessed a superior Sun-god in their

Savitṛ would have no incentive to originate for themselves a very much dwarfed edition of the same deity. Adoption, whether voluntary or forced, of a god from an utterly alien community might have involved the adoption at the same time of strange rites and ceremonies. (*Cf.* the Aśva Sūktas, ṚV. I. 162, 163.) No such tell-tale test is furnished by the hymns addressed to Sūrya. They all follow the same general pattern.

(*f*) *Uṣas.*

107. The Dawn is striking anywhere. But even so Uṣas (Eos) does not affect people of all occupations and in every environment equally. In a valley locked up by mountains (the Aryans had undoubtedly often to negotiate mountain passes in the ordinary course of their travels behind their cattle, sheep and goats ; they could not have discovered Soma otherwise), the Dawn would be seen spanning the universe in just three strides as Viṣṇu is depicted as doing in the Rigveda, and it is by no means improbable that Viṣṇu who is found specially associated with mountains, and not always in the figurative sense (ṚV. VII. 31. 10), might have been originally conceived in the minds of a tribe which habitually passed and re-passed through mountain passes and mountain-locked valleys. In such a surrounding, when the day is just about dawning and the weather is fair, the

light from the still hidden sun striking first the snow-capped mountains to the east and those to the west soon afterwards, and then (the sun still remaining invisible) lighting up the zenith high up above the path of the sun, would just answer Viṣṇu's three strides (see para. 74 *ante*). And light in every form, as has been seen, was conceived by the Aryans (and not the Vedic Aryans only) to have had the power to stretch out the heavens like a canopy over the earth and to keep the two apart without columns, as the Bundahis very pointedly says.[29]

108. Uṣas (Eos) was already the goddess of the Dawn before the ancestors of the Greeks and the Vedic Aryans had been finally sundered from each other, that is, before either group had found settled homes and were still roaming in the grass-lands as nomads. To the intensely poetic temperament of the Vedic Aryan seers she presented herself in similitudes altogether too alluring to allow the anthropological implications behind to come readily up to the surface. The prevailing picture is that of the alert house-mistress, the first to get up and to rouse the others to send each out on his proper business. (*Cf.* Sūrya ; RV. I. 48 ; RV. I. 92. 3, 7, 9 ; 113. 4, 6, 9 ; 124. 4). In this characterisation, she would fit into the agriculturist's household as perfectly as into the nomad's.

[29] See note (22) and paras. 93 and 104 *ante*.

But it may be permissible perhaps to assume that it is not the settled and more prosaically matter-of-fact farmer and artisan but rather the wandering nomad quick to respond to every striking display of beauty and power in the world of wide horizons around him who would see her, now as a dancer putting on her gay attire and again as a maiden triumphantly self-conscious of her beautiful form, smiling, youthful and resplendent, ready to display her charms to the god (Sūrya) who is metaphorically courting her. She strikes him at other times as a fair girl adorned by her mother, who enjoys displaying herself so adorned to all beholders, and once more as a loving wife giving herself to her husband, and finally as a woman who, having no brother or other guardian or chaperon, appears as her own mistress freely before strangers. That there was no false modesty about Uṣas is apparent from every one of these pictures and more so from another in which the seer visualises her as a fair woman displaying herself just as she stood after she had risen from the water in which she had been bathing (RV. I. 92. 4, 7; 123. 10; V. 80. 5). One Ṛṣi sees in her radiant smile the smile even of a flatterer who is seeking her own advantage (RV. I. 92. 6). These, capped at the end by the prayer : " Uṣas, provider of food (*vājinavatī*) bring us that brilliant fortune whereby we may possess offspring. Uṣas, resplendent, awakening pleasant voices (*sunṛtavatī*) dawn richly upon us to-day

bringing cows and horses. Yoke to-day, Uṣas, thy ruddy steeds and then bring us all blessings" (RV. I. 92. 13-15), appear to me to signify that she was first conceived in a wholly nomad environment.

109. I find it hard again to presume that a stay-at-home farmer or artisan would possess the imaginative range which would enable him to pass by swift transition from these sensuous pictures to the comprehension of this same goddess as a deity who wearing out the lives of men, herself remains undecaying, immortal (RV. I. 92. 10, 124. 2), maintaining aeon after aeon the ordinances of the gods (RV. I. 92. 12 ; 123. 8, 9), generating the Āditya Savitṛ (RV. I. 113. 1, VII. 15. 4) and opening out a path for Sūrya (RV. I. 113. 16) ; and which beholds in her finally the visible embodiment of Aditi, mother of the Ādityas (RV. I. 113. 19). She must have had to pass through a long period of domestication in an agriculturist's household before settling down as "the food-providing wife of Sūrya," RV. VII. 75. 5, if that passage should be supposed to stand for anything more than a mere poetic picture,[80] she who, the seer does not yet allow himself to forget, was the daughter of the Sky, the mistress of the world and the generating mother of Sūrya and Savitṛ, (RV. VII. 78. 3, I. 113. 1).

[80] See paras. 105 and 106 *supra*.

(*g*) *The Aśvins.*

110. The Aśvins who are associated with Uṣas as her friends are extremely important members of the Vedic pantheon to judge from the frequency with which they are invoked and the obviously large proportion they take up of the hymn-makers' attention. As Nāsatyau (whatever that designation might have meant originally), they were worshipped in the company of Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa by the Kings of the Mitanni before the 15th century B.C. For reasons already indicated the Pūṣan-worshipping Proto-Aryans appear to me to have picked them and Varuṇa up from other more than one Proto-Aryan tribes with whom they had amalgamated, and this event must have happened in the grass-lands before they and the other Proto-Aryan tribes who worshipped the Nāsatyau and Varuṇa were compelled to abandon their grass-land *habitat.* The obviously artificial manner in which the Nāsatyau were sought to be brought into family relationship with Tvaṣṭṛ and Vivasvat and through the latter with Yama and Yamī has appeared to me to signify that it was the latter who were by that means sought to be drawn from outside into the Proto-Aryan pantheon, already made composite, as stated, by the intermingling of a number of Proto-Aryan tribes amongst themselves.

111. Of Yāska's several guesses as to the specific aspect of the world of nature of which the Aśvins were the guardian deities, the first, namely, that they were called Aśvins because they pervaded (*vyaśnuvāte*) every thing, the one with Moisture and the other with Light, appears to me the most inclusive and appropriate. Youthful always like Uṣas [31] (RV. VII. 67.10), they, these sons of the Sky (RV.X.61.4 ; Vivasvat might originally have meant the Sky), follow her in their car (RV. III. 5.2) in which, according apparently to a later addition, they carry off that tiresome and featureless Sūryā girl who had needed two marriages and an elopement besides, to secure for her father a place amongst the Vedic gods (RV.I. 116.17). They whip their steeds with a honied whip (*kaśā madhumatī*) shedding from it as they go productive germs which germinate all the fires, waters and trees (RV.I. 157.4, 5). It is no doubt for this reason that the Aśvins came to be regarded as the "deliverer" (*vimuch*), and Pūṣan who followed up their work by nourishing all creatures came to qualify himself as the "deliverer's son" (*vimucho napāt*). This rather over-refined division of functions between them taken along with the

[31] Uṣas, it should be remembered, was the daughter of the Sky as the Aśvins were his sons. All the indications point to the same tribe having contributed both Uṣas and the Aśvins. Uṣas does not strike one in relation to the Aśvins as the interloper that Sūryā plainly was.

highly artificial family relationship which is established between them by the latter adopting the former as parents, to my mind, indicates syncretic correlation as I have already stated. The Aśvins again, like Savitṛ, not only germinate but also heal. (Savitṛ, it will be remembered germinates, nourishes and also heals.) There was, apart altogether from readily assignable syncretic intermingling of functions, a great deal of unavoidable duplication of them amongst these firmament gods within even the same tribe. They appeared only too readily to be running into each other. But the environ-bred craving of the Vedic Aryans for a plurality of gods resisted any tendency to merger, which is the explanation of the large number of hymns addressed to the Viśvadevas, including the acutely descriptive, if somewhat Lucianesque one in RV. VIII. 29. (See RV. III. 55 for one of the sublimest.)

112. Quite in their places as germinators in the grass-land milieu, the Aśvins tended, as equally did the Sun-god Savitṛ, to be put out of commission in the discharge of this particular function in countries where vegetation appeared to grow rank except when the clouds perversely withheld their life-giving treasure of rains, and the moisture pervading the atmosphere failed to quench or slake the parching thirst of the hot and sun-heated spongy soil to any appreciable extent.[32] It is not

[32] The steppe soil owes a substantial part of its moisture to the abundant deposit of dew and periodical snow-falls,

surprising therefore to see their function of "healers" gradually coming to the fore-ground and superseding the function of "deliverers." The theory that they might have been deified chiefs who in life had performed holy (healing?) acts, though as old as Yāska, seems scarcely to be called for to account for the origin of the Aśvins.

113. The instances of healing and easily correlated acts of " delivering " from dangerous situations, mentioned in the hymns, run to five pages in Muir's collection of texts (Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 243-48). That of Chyavana, several times alluded to in the Rigveda (I.116.10, 117.13, 118.6 ; V. 74.5), furnishes the text for the Taittirīya Saṃhitā (VI. 4.9.1) and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa later developing a legend to support in the typically Brāhmaṇa style a piece of ritualistic practice, the *aśvinam graham*. The Aśvins, according to this legend, had lost their share in the sacrifices through pracising the healing art amongst men, and these Post-Vedic writings make the Aśvins responsible for recovering the same by a subterfuge. The Aśvins' proper function in this later view (already limned in the Atharva Veda, VII. 53.1) is made out in this legend to have been to physic gods and not men. The gods certainly did not rise in their worshippers' estimation through it. The Aśvins too, in this new view of

phenomena to which low-level lands within the tropics are strangers.

their healing function, quite deservedly passed out of men's ken as objects of worship and invocation in Paurāṇic times.

(*h*) *Mitrā-Varuṇa.*

114. Mitra and Varuṇa, I cannot but suspect, were in the beginning an inseparable pair like the Aśvins, and appear too, like the Aśvins, to have represented the same twin principles of Light and Moisture. But Mitrā-Varuṇa were not quite identical twins like the Aśvins, Mitra inclining more towards the Light principle, Varuṇa in a similar manner listing towards the principle of Moisture. These twin principles appear to have been worshipped under different designations amongst different tribes of Proto-Aryan grass-land nomads, jointly or separately or even in a single impersonation (*e.g.*, Pūṣan), as the spirit moved each set of worshippers ; and Light again appeared in such diverse forms and was so inextricably mixed up with heat that even within each tribe duplication of functions became unavoidable. The entanglement that followed an amalgamation of tribes can therefore be easily imagined ; and such amalgamations were far from an unusual occurrence. One way out of the tangle was the specialisation of like functioning divinities in specific directions, as was observed to have been the case with the Aśvins. Whilst the Aśvins appeared to have progressively fallen in importance in the proximity of

Mitrā-Varuṇa, the latter, on the other hand, appear to have progressed as decisively in the opposite direction, in the end coming to be regarded as the all-seeing and all-pervading maintainers of all law and order in the universe. The transition could not have been very difficult, for whilst Light so long as it is there discovers and discloses, Moisture pervades the universe at all times as even Light cannot do. No transgressor of the divine ordinances could thus hope to evade the vigilance of these omnipresent, and necessarily therefore omniscient, deities. Naturally therefore it fell to these deities to enforce these ordinances upon all creatures and things and to punish transgressions of them, which is how they came to be the regulators of the entire universe, as even the purely Light gods did not (RV. I.24.8, 9; III. 54. 18 ; V. 62.4, 8 ; VI. 70.7 ; VII. 87.5, 6; VII. 86.5, 6 ; VIII. 41.4, 5, 10 ; 42.1 to cite only a few of the texts which will be found collected in Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol.V, pp. 61-63 ; 62-69). Amongst the pair, Varuṇa is obviously accorded precedence ; for he is pictured as seated with Mitra *in a palace supported by a thousand columns.*[33] (RV. II. 41.5 ; V. 62.6 ; VII. 88.5), arrayed in

[33] References to " palace of thousand columns " occur in the Avesta. See Jackson's, " Persia, Past and Present," p. 58. The idea could not have been suggested to the Vedic seers by anything seen in the Vedic Aryan *viśas* of the Panjab. The significance of this and the other italicised passage will presently appear.

golden mail and *surrounded by his retinue of messengers and angels* (*pari spaśo nisedire*, RV. I. 25.13), from where mighty and fixed of purpose, he exercises sovereignty, RV. I.25. 10, without let or hindrance from any, either men or gods. The titles *svarāt* (self-dependent) and *samrāt* (universal monarch) are no hyperboles when applied to them. (For the texts, see Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, p. 60).

115. The resemblance of the above picture to that of Assara Mazās and his Igigi of the Hommel inscription (left by Assurbanipal, the Assyrian Imperial King) and to Ahura and his cabinet of arch-angels and agent angels of the Magians is too close to be altogether accidental ; and there is much to excuse in the attempts that have been made by scholars of eminence to equate Varuṇa etymologically with Ahura. The phonetic gap appears to me however to be unbridgeable. On the other hand, the Hommel inscription leaves hardly any room for doubting that Ahura evolved from the Assyrian Assur (Ashur, Asshur, Asur), the local deity of the metropolis of the first kingdom of Assyria, who during the days of the latter's splendour rose to be the great national god, the peoples' friend and father from whom the Kings derived their power and by whom they were led to victory, an evolution which is paralleled by that of the Yahve of the Jews. (Hosea, Ch. XIV, actually furnishes evidence of Asshur for a time

even competing with Yahve for supremacy, amongst the Israelites in Palestine, in the 8th century B.C). It is this god undoubtedly who figures as the " Assara Mazâs " of the Hommel inscription. The name " Assara Mazās," this scholar rightly concludes, evolved in course of time into the Ahura Mazda of the Magians. Hommel cannot also have been wrong in dating the taking over of the Assyrian national god in this name and style by the Magians not later than the middle of the Second Millennium B.C., considering the time that must have been necessary for the phonetic change of Assara into Ahura to have taken place.

116. The real link to connect Varuṇa with Ahura is thus not to be found in a common etymological source from which the two names may be supposed to have been derived. The name Ahura, if it had an etymological base of any kind at all and was not simply taken from a quite arbitrarily fixed place-name, had without doubt a Semitic or Elamitic and not an Aryan origin. Varuṇa, on the other hand, is clearly an Aryan name, the same which became Ouranos amongst the Greeks ; and the derivations of Varuṇa from the Sanskrit root " Vṛ " (to pervade or cover) is by no means far-fetched, both Varuṇa and Ouranos appearing to have been the all-pervading ruling spirit of the Firmament, equated as the case might be with either or both of the two principles of Light and Moisture or with the Sky itself as their container.

in the mythologies of both the Greeks and the Vedic Aryans.

117. The real link to connect Varuṇa with Ahura is furnished by the title "*asura*" (divine spirit) which is seen from the Vedic hymns to have specifically belonged to Varuṇa (see RV. VII. 65.2), though, it was frequently applied to several of the other gods by way of compliment or hyperbole. An acceptable etymological derivation of this word from a Sanskrit root still remaining to be achieved, I cannot avoid the conclusion that it was not Ahura Mazda who derived this name from the supposed Vedic Sanskrit word "*asura*," but that it was "Assur" or Assura," before he was transformed into "Ahura," who lent the title "*asura*" signifying "divine spirit" to Varuṇa and the other leading Vedic divinities.[34]

[34] "The epithet *asura*, divine, is frequently applied to Varuṇa in particular (as in RV. I. 24.14; II. 27.15; V. 85.5-6; VIII. 42.1) though it is given to other deities in the Vedic pantheon." See Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, p. 61. In the Avesta too, the title "Ahura," though reserved as a rule to refer to Ahura Mazda, is seen to be shared with him by lesser spirits. See, for instance, Yasnas XXXVIII, LXVI, LXVIII. Apām Napāt is spoken of in Yasna VI. 4 as "that kingly *ahura*" and in Yasna VII.7 as "that lofty *ahura*."

The possibility of the term "*asura*," in the sense in which it is found employed in the Rigveda, having been derived ultimately from the Assyrian "Assur" had (I

118. Where and when did this borrowing take place? Unquestionably in Iran at a time when the Vedic Aryans' ancestors were living in close neighbourly proximity to the Magians (the two people, it will be seen later, could never have really amalgamated) and as fellow-subjects within the peace, or at any rate under the sphere of sovereignty, of the same royal rulers, presumably of Assyria. (See Note C on "Pax Assyriana," at the end of this chapter.)

119. The word "*asura*" connoted something to which the nomad grass-landers were entire strangers. They were led by chiefs who were not hedged round by the state, solemnity and mystery which surrounded territorial sovereigns like those of Assyria. And people who have not lived within the peace of sovereigns of this description (whom in course of time they come even to deify as gods incarnate) can never rise to the conception of a royal divinity, *svarāt* as well as *samrāt*, which was comprehended in the designation of "*asura*" (divine spirit) as applied to Varuṇa. The local deity, Ashur, Asshur, Assur or Asur, of the Assyrian city of that name, did not himself get

find from Dent's Non-classical Mythology, pp. 16-17) occurred to Dr. K. M. Banerjea so far back as 1880. The Hommel inscription appears to me to make Dr. Banerjea's conjecture a certainty.

See Note C on "Pax Assyriana," at the end of this chapter in further elucidation of paras. 117-18.

magnified into the sovereign proportions of the Assyrian national god of later days before that sovereignty had been actually achieved and established in the persons of the rulers of the Assyrian Empire. (*Cf.* the like promotion of the Yahve conception amongst the Israelites under their Kings.) The Vedic Aryan conception of Indra marks the highest limits of the conception of a divine personality to which the Vedic Aryans had the potentiality to rise in the political environment of the Panjab. Their conception of Varuṇa was not derived from that environment but was reminiscent simply of a past lived under the shadow of the Assyrian royalty in the days of its growing splendour, which in itself furnishes a reason for dating the departure of the Vedic Aryans for the Panjab at some time near the middle of the Second Millennium B.C. As this conception was a reminiscence only and not factually related to the contemporary environment of the Panjab, the coming into the foreground of Indra, whilst Varuṇa receded behind, is easily accounted for.[35]

[35] One of the outstanding puzzles of the post-Vedic Indian literature is the degradation of the "*asura*" conception to signify power directed to every form of perverse use, and the creation, apparently by derivation from it, of its opposite "*sura*" which was to draw into itself the eulogistic significance formerly belonging to "*asura*"! How far the occurrence of the initial vowel "*a*" in "*asura*" (easily mistaken for a negative prefix) may have been responsible for the transformation, it is for professors

120. But it was an extraordinarily fine one, taken altogether, this Mitrā-Varuṇa reminiscence. They were not sovereign deities only, they were pre-eminently wise and just sovereigns, haters and dispellers of falsehood (RV. I. 152.1 ; VII. 66.73) and the guardians of truth and faith amongst men (see RV. I. 23.5 and other texts cited in Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, p. 68). But their justice was not untempered by mercy, and they preferred that the foolish worshippers should become wise and the sinful ones repent and turn virtuous. They were besought to forgive sins even (RV. I. 24 and 25 ; VII. 60.6, 7). I shall show later that the Mitrā-Varuṇa conception of the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans in Iran was in this respect kindlier than what one gathers from the Avesta the Zoroastrian Ahura conception might have been. He (Ahura) certainly is made out in it to have been as jealous and intolerant a divinity almost for a Supreme God, as was the Jewish Yahve. It

of linguistics to decide. The Upaniṣads frequently indulge in parables in which the Suras are invariably figured as god-like beings who prove successful in their quest of truth whilst error as invariably besets and confounds the deluded Asuras. If I am right in my surmises that the Vrātya Rājanyas who originated the Upaniṣads were immigrant Magians, this use or abuse of the term "*asura*" would be seen to argue for that immigration having taken place before the Magians had come to equate the term "*asura*" with the idea of "divine spirit" in the sense it came to bear in the Vedas and the Avesta.

was the Yazata Mithra (the one of the pair whom, as will be seen later, post-Zoroastrian theosophy took over along with his worshippers, when the Iranians passed into the Zarathustran fold) who, I shall further show, took this missing element with him into Zoroastrianism.

121. Thus, though there can be no doubt whatever that the name Varuṇa was Aryan and that the original native god of that name represented in a special manner the principle of the life-giving Moisture which appeared to pervade the earth and the heavens, he, Varuṇa, gathered attributes which did not belong to him in his original home (namely, those of the Supreme Divine Ruler of the Universe) through Assyrian contact and association, which his worshippers equally with him owed to the time when they lived in Iran as neighbours and fellow-subjects of the Magians under ruling Assyrian Sovereign Kings or at any rate under the sphere of influence of those Kings.

(i) *The Ādityas, Aditi, Dyaus Pitar and Pṛthivī.*

122. The syncretic evolution of the Vedic Aryan religion as outlined above furnishes what I venture to consider to be a not unsatisfactory explanation of the Vedic Aryan conception of the Ādityas.

123. The position of the Ādityas has been sought by some scholars to be correlated with the Amesha

Spenta cabinet of archangels (Immortals) of the Magian Ahura and through them with the Igigi following of the Assyrian Assur or Assara. The number of the Ādityas and their identification for one thing have been very variable and uncertain. But apart from that there is really no one Supreme God whose will and purposes they may be supposed to have habitually subserved. They were each "*Svarāt*," self-dependent in their spheres and functions.

124. The likelier explanation is to be found in the manner in which the Vedic Aryan pantheon appears to have grown through the amalgamation or contact of tribes and peoples worshipping gods with different names but performing similar functions in nearly identical manners or in different permutations and combinations of them. An amalgamation of tribes would thus be immediately followed by a struggle for existence between the more important and commonly invoked divinities, which, left to work itself out, would sometimes lead to the supersession of one or other of these gods by another, or specialization in some cases of similar divinities in specific dissimilar directions which would enable them to co-exist without serious contest and confusion. Several instances of both these lines of development have been noticed already. But this might not always happen, and the question in any case of precedence amongst like-looking gods and even amongst

gods who though not functioning in identical ways would still claim priority in point of importance over one another would be constantly demanding solution. In such a predicament, the idea of making them equal members of the same family would naturally suggest itself as the easiest way out of the *impassé*.

125. The Vedic hymns disclose faint and rather inconclusive traces of attempts to affiliate the principal deities as children of Dyaus (the Sky) and Pṛthivī (the Earth-Goddess). These two were already in the pantheon, but occupying such subordinate and insignificant positions that the attempt to make them parents and constitute them in this way into beings superior to all the *asuras* could not, and apparently did not, meet with success. Dyaus and Pṛthivī are indeed spoken of in a general way as the parents not only of the gods *but of men even.* But these statements have the appearance of a quasi-logical or philosophical subsumption rather than that of a real flesh and blood affiliation. It is plain too from Muir's conscientious collection of texts bearing upon Dyaus and Pṛthivī, in Section VI of Vol. V of the Sanskrit Texts, that the Vedic seers could not always feel sure that they were gods at all, being frequently spoken of as having been created by the Ādityas. They even address interrogatories to themselves as to how the sky and the earth could have originated at all. And this was

very natural, for to the wandering nomad the earth and the sky served as the arena whereon their impersonations of the mighty powers of nature enacted their moving dramas, rather than as actors themselves participating in these cosmic operations (see RV. I. 185). The Vedic Dyaus was in truth a blank framework and the Earth-Goddess was an utterly inert and bloodless figure, compared with the over-lively Mother-(Earth)-Goddess of sanctified incontinence of the Mediterranean regions who will receive a good deal of attention from me further down in this book, or even with the less concupiscently significant Mother-Goddess of fertility of the Gangetic valley, who whether capable of being equated with the Earth or not will also come up for treatment in the same context.

126. The Vedic Aryans' efforts towards correlating the several impersonations of the grander operations of nature derived from a number of different sources appear to have culminated finally in their invention of the fine Aditi abstraction, for an abstraction she, Aditi, undoubtedly was and no flesh-and-blood impersonation, to judge from the texts addressed, or having reference, to her in the Vedic hymns, all of which will be found collected in Section III of Volume V of Muir's Sanskrit Texts.

127. The only idea besides that of being the mother of the Ādityas which goes into the Aditi

conception is that of sinlessness, in itself a very late evolution in the Vedic and indeed in all Aryan theosophic thought. She was so much of an abstraction indeed that she did not even seem to feel the need of having a husband assigned to her to whom to bear all these mighty children. The Proto-Aryan nomads and their descendants, it should be remembered in this connection, were confirmed believers in the pre-eminence of the male over the female principle and the assigning to the Ādityas of a male parent who would necessarily, from that relation alone, come to occupy a position of super-eminence over all the Ādityas[36] was obviously attended with serious difficulties which the assigning to them of a female parent only, and a highly abstract one at that, did in any case successfully get over. And so arose Aditi the sinless, mother of Ādityas, with no male consort to answer the physiological necessity of procreating them. The Ādityas had to be unprocreated beings because of this totally unfillable vacancy in the paternal office.[37] But the

[36] RV.I.155.3, previously cited with reference to Viṣṇu's attributes, gives clear expression to the relative standing of a father and a son, as the Vedic Aryans viewed it, in the following passage, *putro avaram varam pitur nāma*, which may be rendered into English as follows:— "the son has the inferior name (or standing), the superior belongs to the father."

[37] Later Indian mythology has no hesitation in filling up this omission (any more than had Greco-Roman

Ādityas suffered no diminution through being the sons only of the sinless Aditi. Far from it ; it was an honour to be designated an Āditya as it was an honour to be ranked an *asura*.

(*j*) *Yama, the Pitṛs and Apas.*

128. Yama,[38] the Pitṛs,[39] Sarasvatī and the Apas[40] will come up more conveniently for treatment after I shall have completed my review of the Avestan materials which I shall take up immediately.

NOTE B. M. CHARLES AUTRAN AND THE VEDIC TEXTS

(See para. 57.)

Since the above was written, I have had my attention drawn to certain views concerning the Vedic Texts which have been put forward by M. Charles Autran in his recently published book, " Mithra, Zoroastre et la Prehistoire Aryenne du Christianisme (1935)." He seems virtually to reject the Vedic hymns as (from his point of view)

mythology in inventing suitable myths to account for the supersession of Ouranos by Saturn and of Saturn again by Jupiter), the difficulties which confronted the Vedic Aryans' ancestors (during the active progress of the syncretic process) having ceased to be operative in that late age.

[38] See *post*, paras. 191-92.

[39] See *post*, paras. 187-90, 193.

[40] See *post*, paras. 213-18, 221.

a proper subject for scientific study on the ground that they fail to reveal the existence of " organised and organic doctrines " of sufficient fixity to admit of such treatment. The Vedic texts, in the first place, do not impress him as being sufficiently homogeneous, though the self-same divine personations appear to be the objects of these texts " from one end to the other ; " and, secondly, because the hymn-making practice of the Ṛsis had given the authors of the hymns opportunity (of which they had not failed to avail themselves to the fullest extent) of indulging in individual poetic effusions, which to his mind had tended to deprive them of doctrinal consistency, though here too he has not denied that there had always existed within and alongside of the hymns traditional hymnological formulas, evolved (as he recognises) during a long course of pre-historic liturgical practice, and a relative fixity of certain rites and other details associated therewith.

As to the latter criticism, it is perfectly true that the makers of the Vedic hymns, whilst giving due weight and place to the heritage of hymnological material left in their hands by their predecessors, openly avowed their pride and pleasure in framing new, and in their own estimation, more aptly conceived and finer-worded songs of praise in honour of their gods, and this they did from exactly the same motive that appears to have prompted David, the Israelite King, to sing " new " songs

in praise of Yahve and play " skilful " accompaniments thereto (Psalms 33.3). But this lack of hide-bound esoterism in the songs of David, so far from justifying their rejection (as to M. Autran it has seemed to do) as proper material for historical and comparative studies, furnishes on the other hand valuable evidence (the loss of which would have been deplorable) of the gradual transformation of the God of the Hebrews from the jealous and exacting Yahve of the earlier texts to the God of Christ of the New Testament, an evolution which is seen again, at one stage, to have received serious checks through the action of the priestly leaders of the exiled Jews in Babylonia who (M. Autran himself has clearly established in his book) were so strongly influenced by the Zoroastrian doctrines of Evil, Hell and the Last Judgment that they made these an integral part of the Jewish creed of a later age against the opposition of the conservative Sadducees.

This eschatology of Zoroastrian origin entirely conforms to the definition of " fixed " and "homogeneous" "doctrines" as conceived by M. Autran. But doctrines of this order of esoteric growth are surely not of greater account for a natural history study of human ideas and institutions than the spontaneous poetic utterances of priestly or other leaders of tribes who in faith, sentiment and outlook were so well attuned to the rest of their people that their individual composi-

tions (however original in language and turns of expression each of them might be) drew quick and immediate responses from the hearts of the community, whilst doctrines of the former order, on the other hand, have invariably taken long courses of propagandistic teaching for obtaining such general acceptance. Hymns of praises to established and accepted divinities which echo the faith and the sentiments of the community in this quick, natural and spontaneous manner are certainly better anthropological material for scientific study than schemes of philosophy, theosophy and theology, about the general acceptance of which outside the schools one can hardly ever feel sure, in spite of their repeated iteration in the books and writings of the schools. The hymns of the Rigveda were decidedly not chaotic individual poetical performances comparable to those of the Augustans and the Elizabethans. They were poetry truly, but tribal religious poetry, for all that they were the products, in part, of special inspirations felt by individual members of the community.

The chapter just concluded has, I hope, established that the hymns of the Rigveda as a whole were not a " conglomeration " of random poetical outpourings. Besides exhibiting devotional allegiance of a markedly distinctive order to the same set of deities, they represented ideas and attitudes of sufficient " fixity " and " homogeneity " to fall into more or less definite patterns. The task of

catching these patterns from the scattered hymns and texts and clothing them in a modern language presents obvious difficulties. But that is a long way indeed from saying that the task is impossible and that all attempt to undertake it (and it has been successfully undertaken before M. Autran's time and mine) must be foredoomed to failure.

For a balanced and highly instructive appraisement of the relative scientific values of creeds against beliefs, see Professor Gilbert Murray's "Five Stages of Greek Religion" (Thinkers' Library Series), pp. 173 ff.

Note C, Pax Assyriana.

(See paras. 117-118.)

Recent archaeological discoveries leave no doubt about the dominating influence exercised by the Assyrian over neighbouring cultures, of which the following is by no means an exaggerated estimate :—

" From the Biblical notices, even when supplemented by writers of antiquity, we should acquire a very limited and one-sided view of this really great nation. We could never estimate its real significance in the struggle of the nations, nor duly appreciate the influence it exerted beyond the limits of its empire. For in Egypt, in Tarsus, in Cappadocia and Cilicia, in Media and old

Persia (and the writer might well have included Syria and Palestine) its Kings fought and conquered, imposed not only tribute but customs, left monuments and colonists, whose influence extended far beyond garrison duties and threats of vengeance on rebellion." C. H. W. Johns in "Ancient Assyria" (Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature), 1912, p. 5.

Politically, the Assyrian domination was as harsh as that of Persia was mild and benevolent; but that there were benigner aspects which the Royal inscriptions of the Assyrian Kings found fewer opportunities to commemorate than the conquests and cruelties that accompanied them, can be gathered from the inscriptions themselves. A race of Kings who could give Ahura Mazda to the Magians, and the *ahura* and *asura* conception to them and the Vedic Aryans must have possessed attributes sufficient to outweigh the sickening tale of barbarities, practised on the conquered peoples and kings, which is found faithfully recorded in these inscriptions. See *en passant* the same book at pp. 24 and 46, for the date of the first Assyrian King to boast of his imperial pretensions in inscriptions, a Shamsi-adad, who could not have flourished later than the 18th Century B.C. and might have been as old as the 20th; at pp. 71-77, for the methods of conquest, accompanied by deportations of conquered peoples to other parts of the empire, pursued

by Tiglath Pilesar I (1125 B.C. to 1105 B.C.) "to make them all of one tongue;" and at pp. 98, 103, 107, for the amount of attention Media is seen to have received in the Assyrian royal inscriptions. To style them as "the Romans of the East" does hardly enough to bring out the more important, if less spectacular, cultural effects of the Assyrians' domination of Western Asia. Sargon (temp. 722 B.C. to 705 B.C.), who thought nothing of flaying alive several of the enemy kings he conquered and yet thoughtfully provided teachers to educate a population of his subjects collected in the new city which he founded "to be of one language" and "to fear God and the King," and who began the library his great-grandson Assurbanipal was to make famous for all times, was (like Asoka) a benevolent monarch in all his dealings with his numerous subjects; and this was no new but the accustomed policy of his predecessors on the Assyrian throne, namely, of being soft or severe as occasion seemed to require. He even set up Messianic claims in which he was able to persuade his subjects to believe as implicitly as he did himself (*op. cit.*, pp. 121-122). But the distinctive claim he made of having been "the protector of Asshur's renown" differed only in degree (not in quality) from those of the other Assyrian monarchs who were all persuaded, that they were fighting, conquering, exterminating and even flaying alive their adversaries

by the favour of their " Lord " Asshur and at his behest. Darius Hystaspes's attitude towards Ahura Mazda whom he acclaimed in his inscriptions as the God of Victory of his Nation (the Aryans) was qualitatively identical. The conceptions of Asshur, Ahura and Yahve, the reader will not fail to observe, passed through parallel courses of amelioration, with the progress of time, in the minds of their respective worshippers. The event proved otherwise, owing to special environmental circumstances as we have seen, in the case of Indra (see para. 69 and note thereto, *supra*).

For the texts of some of the Assyrian inscriptions the reader may consult Dr. A. H. Sayce's " Assyria, its Princes, Priests and People (The Religious Tract Society), 1926," Appendix ; and for Darius's inscriptions, see Dr. A. V. Williams Jackson's " Persia, Past and Present, 1909," pp. 170-183.

Darius, it is noteworthy, followed the Assyrian practice in other respects besides preparing and publishing inscriptions. The Behistun inscriptions specifically announce that his Median adversary Favarti who had contested his right to the throne at the head of an army which he defeated was cruelly mutilated, chained and finally crucified (Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 157).

CHAPTER IV

THE MAGI AND ZOROASTER. IRANIAN INTRUSIONS INTO ZOROASTRIAN MAGIANISM

§ 1. *Introductory.*

129. The Avestan literature has been very intensely studied by scholars of outstanding eminence ; and the moot points arising from that literature have been formulated and discussed with a thoroughness which may well incite envy in the hearts of students of the vaster (and for that reason less tractable) and less systematised literature of the Vedas. All of them again have been laboriously reviewed and discussed so lately as the second decade of this century by Dr. J. H. Moulton in his Hibbert Lectures on " Early Zoroastrianism." If I have found myself unable at many points to agree with Dr. Moulton's evaluation of the material he has industriously brought together, and if again I should find, in the treatment by him of the whole subject, occasion to deplore an apparently overmastering disposition to magnify the greatness of Zoroaster at the expense, particularly, of the Magi, this I hope will not be taken as indicating any lack of appreciation on my part of the immense pains he has taken to understand and elucidate according to his own lights the highly complicated historical milieu which conditioned

the birth and evolution of Zoroastrianism. Whatever interpretation he may have been led to place upon the data he has collected, the data are there to speak directly to the reader, and for this service every student of the history of the times must be grateful to Dr. Moulton.

§ 2. *Magian Foundations of Zoroastrianism. The Iranian Goad.*

130. The Avesta is more nearly related in language and content to the Vedas than to any other survival of ancient literature. It appears to have been composed in part in one and in part in another of two dialectic variations of what must at one time have been one language, and this latter and the language of the Vedic hymns must in their turn have been variants of another common language, spoken not later than the beginning of the Second Millennium B.C., at the latest, in what must have been the common home of peoples from whom the Vedic Aryans on the one hand and the authors of the Avesta on the other derived their respective religious heritages upon which they built these their characteristic sacred literatures.

131. The Avestan literature is less uniform in language and composition than the literature of the Vedic hymns which formed the subject-matter of the last chapter. The Avestan material which

will be considered in this chapter falls in fact into three distinguishable types of composition: (*i*) the *Gathas* proper, which are really sermons in metre (and quite dull ones at that to any one who is not as seriously minded at least as their authors). (*ii*) Hymns of praises and prayers. (*iii*) Liturgical or ritualistic matter. The portion of the Avesta which goes by the name of "the *Yasnas*" (meaning worship) includes all of the first variety of compositions, the only compositions which properly bear the designation of Gathas, and some of the second variety, the proper name for which is "*Yashts*," and some again of the third variety. The second variety of compositions, however, is mainly contained in another portion of the Avesta which is specially designated "the Yashts." But as already stated some Yashts also occur in the Yasna portion and some again in the Vendidad which as a whole, however, is a ceremonial code and falls mostly within the third category.

132. The Gathas consist of seventeen pieces, five of which are ascribed to Zoroaster himself, but the remaining twelve also appear to bear close historical connection with his personality. They are nearest to the Vedic hymns in language though not in the character or style of their composition. (These seventeen pieces are contained in Yasnas 28-34, 43-46, 47-50, 51, 53). Of the Yasht portion of the Yasna, the most important from

my point of view is the Yasna (also called Gatha) Haptanghaiti (Yasnas 35-42), of which an abstract will be found in Appendix A to this book. It is in prose but in a dialect as old as that of the Gathas. For reasons which I shall state in due course I consider this Yasna to be older material than the Zoroastrian Gathas, besides that it exhibits characteristics which do not belong to the Yashts proper (those that is to say, which are contained in the portion of the Avesta which specially bears the title of "Yashts") or even to the remaining Yashts of the Yasnas (Yasnas 54 to 70). The language of the Yashts proper is more removed from that of the Vedic hymns than the language of the Gathas and of the Yasna Haptanghaiti. But in style and composition they are more akin to the Vedic hymns than to the rest of the Avesta.

133. The language of the Avesta, in no part of it, has been shown or suggested to exhibit any trace of Semitic or Elamitic intrusions, and furnishes by itself no ground for supposing that the peoples, whose scripture it was, spoke any but some dialect or other of an Aryan tongue which was genetically connected with the language spoken by the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans. The similarity of language in this instance appears to betoken kinship rather than the recurring neighbourly intercourse of which I have spoken before (*vide* paras. 25-37, *supra*).

134. As already indicated, the bulk of the literary material composing the Avesta has come down from pre-Zoroastrian times, and that too, as will be seen, from not one single ancient source. It will be seen to have come from several such sources and the religious ideas and conceptions which it stands for, except for later embellishments (which it is not difficult to disentangle), are of pre-Zoroastrian origin. Zoroaster's contributions to the Avesta, quantitatively speaking, will be found to have been altogether quite moderate.

135. But the influence which Zoroaster's work and teaching exercised and their effects upon history are not to be measured by the relatively moderate contributions he made to the literature and to the religious ideas of the Avesta. What he did in fact strive for and accomplish was to change the texture and complexion of the entire social, economic and the political environment in which he was born and nurtured. He was a successful rebel and revolutionist. The fire of rebellion in him was itself struck into existence, and fed till it became a raging flame, by those same extremely abnormal social, economic and political conditions in which he found himself placed and held in impotent bondage in his early manhood. For a proper appreciation of Zoroaster's position in history, it is very necessary therefore to try to understand those conditions. Fortunately, we have not for this purpose to depend entirely upon

the evidence furnished by the Avestan literature, valuable and highly significant as that will be found to be; for there is, besides the Avesta, a considerable quantity of Greek material and inscriptions left by several members of the Achaemenian house of Persian Kings which corroborate and supplement the evidence furnished by the Avesta.

136. For the above reasons, the present inquiry will not be confined merely to the ascertainment of the quality and quantity of Zoroaster's contributions to the religion of the Avesta as such. It will concern itself even more directly with an examination of the political and social circumstances which provoked and conditioned Zoroaster's reform movement, the special directions he was able by his work and teachings to give to them, and the manner again in which his successors might have been able to carry out his purposes, or to thwart or even reverse them as I have repeatedly found it suggested they did. I shall have to examine these questions with special reference to the position which Dr. Moulton has taken up in the latest and the most comprehensive treatment which the subject as a whole has received, namely, in his Hibbert Lectures on "Early Zoroastrianism" previously mentioned, where he appears, in the first place, to assign almost absolute originality to Zarathustra's religious ideas, so as to suggest that Zarathustra dropped them, as it were, upon the Iranian world from soaring

heights which rested upon no base or foundation in the material world in which they all lived. He goes on, in the next place, to make Zarathustra's "Magian" successors in the ministry responsible for engineering and carrying through a "counter-reform" movement opposed alike to the letter and to the spirit of Zarathustra's teachings.

137. Of very high value for the ascertainment of the special features of that material world is the condition of Median society as it was found by Herodotus about two centuries after Zoroaster's time, and of which he has left a description in paragraph 134 of the First Book of his History.

138. Herodotus found the Median population divided in his time into six tribes, two of whom he designated Arizanti and the Magi. These six tribes appear from his description to have been disposed in a kind of feudal hierarchy which would be quite natural in a country which had been subjected to successive waves of invasions from the grass-lands, so that upon a producing lowest order composed mainly of agriculturists, artisans and labourers would be found superposed several strata of rent and service-receivers. Dr. Moulton has adduced several reasons of varying weight and persuasiveness for concluding that the lowest order of producers ("serfs" as he has regarded them) were the Magi, and the highest the ruling Persian-Aryan clan of the Arizanti. The internal evidence furnished by the Gathas

entirely confirms him in his conclusion. But the Gathas and the Yasnas as a whole show also that the "Soul of Kine" (by which term this lowest order of producers is often figuratively indicated) was not entirely exhausted by the proletarian serfs, artisans and labouring men. In the Haptanghaiti Yasna Yasht prayer for helpers (Yasna XL) the enumeration is made to include "a kinsman lord" and "*hakhema*" (clients or peers ?); and this Magian intelligentsia included as of course, and were indeed led by, the authors of these prayers, the "*zaotar*" or "*athravan*" priests of the Magians. In Yasna XXX. 6, one of the Gathas of which Zarathustra was indubitably the author, Zarathustra calls himself a "*zaotar.*"

139. But contrary to this express statement of Zarathustra himself and the almost unanimously accepted traditional view that Zoroaster was a Magus, Dr. Moulton has put forward and undeviatingly held to the thesis that he, Zoroaster, was not a Magus at all but an Arizanti Iranian noble.

140. In the Gathas, Zarathustra not only openly declares himself a "*zaotar*" of the brotherhood of producers, but constitutes himself their special champion and the mouthpiece of their grievances against the chronic oppression and exploitation of them by their lords and masters, the "*Kavis*" as they are called in the Gathas, and the latters' priestly advisers, instigators and coadjutors, the "*Karapans,*" who between them

appear to me to account for the immigrant Iranian people of several grades noticed above. These apparently lived upon the produce of the land without contributing in any manner to the toil which made it fruitful. The "Soul of Kine" did not, as Dr. Moulton appears in places to suggest, suffer only from the occasional depredations of prowling nomads, the prototypes in those older days of the modern Kurds, but chiefly and much more grindingly and grievously from chronic, and apparently also senseless, exploitations on the part of this permanently superimposed settled order of Kavis and Karapans; and it is against the methods, habits and customs of these latter that his fulminations in the Gathas are principally directed. These exploiters of the producing classes appear, from the Avesta, to have been worshippers of the Daevas, a rabble crew of divinities as disorderly (in Magian estimation) as themselves, and utterly unlike Ahura and his cabinet of Archangels (the Amesha Spentas), whom (the Haptanghaiti Yasna quite conclusively shows) the Magians had been worshipping from long before Zarathustra appeared on the scene.

141. Zarathustra is much more circumstantial in his denunciations of the individual instances of wrong-doing from which he himself had personally suffered at the hands of the Kavis and Karapans than he is in describing the several ways in which the "Soul of Kine" as a whole suffered

from the settled habits and practices of their oppressors, the Daevayasnians. It is however easily gathered from the language and tenor of the Gathas that the worship by the Kavis of their gods took the form of hecatombs of bigger and smaller cattle offered as sacrifices to their gods, and the eating, in the name of religion, of the meat thereof to the accompaniment of an immoderate amount of drinking and roistering, all of which practices were abominated by the staid and homely "Soul of Kine." Not being producers themselves, the burden of providing the wherewithal for these religious dissipations (amongst others) of the Iranian feudal lords and their priests must ultimately have fallen upon the producing Magian population. Add to this that the Kavis were not only oppressive but also incompetent masters, since they failed to protect the producers from irregular spoliations by nondescript nomad thieves and robbers who share in Zarathustra's anathemas with the Kavis. The impression a perusal of these anathemas leaves is that the Kavis (who went before Vishtaspa) lacked intelligence even to discern that they were by their conduct tending to kill the very geese who by the exercise of every form of thrift and self-restraint amongst themselves had been laying golden eggs for them. The agonised prayers which Zarathustra addresses to Mazda to find for him a Kavi who would rescue the producers from this Slough of Despond and establish at the same time the

righteous order for all right-thinking and right-living people (as he, Zarathustra, understood right-thinking and right-living to be) and the earnest search, fruitless at first but in the end successful, which he declares he made for the Kavi after his heart, find meaning only in the circumstances of the society as outlined above. These, there is scarcely any room for doubting, were what provided the spur which urged Zarathustra to initiate and untiringly pursue the course of passionate proselytism which marked and distinguished the religious movement sponsored by him from the evenly progressing, poetical, and only very moderately theosophical evolution of the Vedic Aryan religion.

142. But though there is this clear evidence of Median society having been, from before Zoroaster's time, politically stratified in this manner, there are no grounds whatever for supposing that "caste" in the Indian sense divided the six tribes from each other or any of them (even the Magi and the Arizanti) from the others. Still less can it be supposed to have divided the Magian "*zaotars*" from the other Magians or from the rest of the population, though the marked differences in the customs observed by the Magians on the one hand and the Kavi people on the other may well be supposed to have stood in the way of the free intermingling of the former with the rest of the population. The Magians do indeed appear to have been

a rather close-knit exclusive people when Zarathustra appeared on the scene. But, as will be seen later, he left it more receptive of foreign ideas and foreign blood than he found it on his arrival. From Yasna XL. 6 (one of the Haptanghaiti Yashts) it appears that before Zarathustra's arrival the Magian *zaotars* were still looking for a " kinsman lord " (for one, that is to say, of their own order) to lead them out of the wilderness. It was Zarathustra's statesman-like realization of the futility of this hope (a realization which, missed evidently during the desperately ineffective years of his early preachings, he might quite conceivably have owed to Jamaspa, the Magian Prime Minister of Kavi Vishtaspa and his future son-in-law and successor to be in the ministry)[42] that led him to go out in search of powerful Iranian Kavi converts and Kavi patrons to take up and enforce his schemes of reform ; and it must have been this necessary and courageous step that had the indirect

[42] See Ys. XXIX, XXXII, XLVI, XLVIII, XLIX, L, LI, particularly Ys. XLIX, 7-9. Making due allowances for difficulties of interpretation, these verses clearly point to Frashaostra having been one of the " kinsman-lords " who did not by themselves suffice to provide for the brotherhood of faithful tillers the " sheltering headship " which Zoroaster was looking for and was enabled to find in Vishtaspa, by the helpful exertions, without doubt, of that same family, Frashaostra's brother Jamaspa being then in the employ and confidence of Vishtaspa as his vizier.

but immediate effect of converting the narrowly bounded conservative faith of Zoroaster's ancestors into the dynamic proselytising Zoroastrianism which he left in the hands of his successors at death and which, the events showed, was to be and remain the State-religion of Persia for several centuries to come.

143. To sum up, Zarathustra's reform movement appears to have arisen as a protest against the economic exploitation of the Magian producers by their Iranian lords and masters. This exploitation was closely bound up with the religious practices of the exploiters which, in themselves and also for the results they produced, were repugnant to the Magians. The reform movement had thus to be (and it was an advantage perhaps in Zarathustra's times that it was) both economic and religious. Zarathustra was a Magian *zaotar* and knew from personal experience how and where the shoe pinched his people. He realised that he must convert powerful Iranian Kavis to his way of thinking, economically and theosophically, and enlist the active support of these same Iranian converts for his schemes of reform if he was to make any headway at all with these schemes. The active proselytising reform movement which Zoroaster in this way came to initiate did not originate as a movement of protest or dissent against Magianism as such. Iranian oppression was its provoking cause. Zarathustra's religious ideas were

fundamentally those which he had inherited from his Magian ancestors ; but these, it will be seen later, he suitably developed and adapted to serve in the first place the requirements of the cause he championed and the requirements next of the Iranian converts to his inherited faith as so modified.

144. These conclusions all lie so plainly and patently upon the surface of the inquiry that I consider it to be entirely unnecessary to enter into a detailed examination of the extraordinary syllogistic adventure which Dr. Moulton was led into undertaking to support his pet thesis that Zoroaster was no Magus at all but an Iranian aristocrat, or his further speculations, equally extraordinary and unsubstantiated, as to how on Zarathustra's death the despised (and according to him, despicable) Magian priests managed and were suffered to walk coolly into the succession to the Ministry of what had by then come to be accepted as the State-religion of the Naotara House of Iranian Kings whom Zarathustra had succeeded in making converts to his (according to Dr. Moulton) brand-new religious creed. And Dr. Moulton's self-created troubles did not by any means end here. For he had to invent reasons for persuading his readers as to how these Magian *zaotars* managed not only to take exclusive possession of this ministry, but also of the entire body of what by origin was (on his shewing) Iranian scriptures,

so that what little of those scriptures came to be saved and restored many centuries later from the destruction they had met through vandalism of one sort or another was due entirely to the invaluable, if interested, assistance rendered by these same "foreign shamans" as he has called them. But as if these troubles were not enough, Dr. Moulton's strong inclination to dissociate them from Zaraţhustra in every possible way led him to propound the further thesis that the Magians [and indeed the entire Median population (as to whom see para. 177 *infra*) save and except the Arizanti Persians] were and remained even so late as in the reign of Darius Hystaspes (B. C 521-485) an Elamitic-speaking people, sole custodians and preservers though they proved themselves to be of scriptures composed entirely in two if not three dialects of a tongue which was not their own. And the strangest part of these speculations is that although Dr. Moulton is positive that the Magian *zaotars* in performing their task of restoration had deliberately introduced into the restored scriptures a great deal that did not belong to them, these nevertheless show no traces whatever of deposits, conscious or unconscious, which admit of identification as Elamitic by language or otherwise.

145. The whole of the so-called "reasons" adduced by Dr. Moulton in support of these speculations of his concerning the Magians will be found

on examination to amount to no more than this that the Magian *zaotars* were "foreign shamans," with a reputation amongst their less sophisticated neighbours and contemporaries for being "skilled magicians and occultists," a reputation upon which they were able to trade to such purpose as to have thereby easily succeeded in capturing first the ministry of the religion of a dominating foreign nobility and later through its means to have got exclusive possession and esoteric control of the whole of the scriptures of this foreign ruling nobility who on their part never for once ceased to despise them as serfs and slaves according to Dr. Moulton's own findings.

146. It ought not to be difficult for me to prove, as I shall presently do, that the Avesta was fundamentally and by origin Magian scriptures which later came to include Iranian elements by derivation or borrowing. But it is necessary first to lay the axe once and for all at the root of the somewhat wide-spread and facile opinion that the Magi were, and were reputed amongst their neighbours and contemporaries to have been, a people standing for a low order of morals, civilization and culture.

147. What kind of reputation the Magian priesthood had amongst their foreign neighbours and contemporaries will appear from the following quotation from the Greek writings of the Cilician Diogenes Laertius who flourished in the Second

Century A.D. I take this quotation (omitting a few passages) as I found it at pp. 413 to 418 of Dr. Moulton's book on "Early Zoroastrianism." I do not make any abstract of my own to avoid all risks of unconscious misrepresentation.[43]

"The Chaldeans busy themselves with astronomy and prediction but the Magi with the worship of the gods, with sacrifices and prayers, as if no one but themselves have the ear of the gods. They propound their views concerning the being and origin of the gods, whom they hold to be fire, earth and water. They condemn the use of images, and specially the error of those who attribute to the divinities differences of sex. They hold discourse on justice and deem it impious to practise cremation, but they see no impiety in marriage with a mother or daughter, as Sotion [44] relates in his 23rd Book. Further they practise divination and forecast the future declaring that their gods appear to them in visible form. Moreover they say that the air is full of shapes which stream forth like vapour and enter the eyes of the keen-sighted. They prohibit personal ornament and the wearing of gold. Their dress is white, they make their bed in the ground

[43] Dr. Moulton himself got this quotation from a translation sent to him by Mr. R. D. Hicks.

[44] Sotion of Alexandria who flourished a century or more after Herodotus, in the Third Century B. C. (La Grande Encyclopedei).

and their food is herb, cheese and coarse bread. Their staff is a reed......With the art of Magic they are wholly unacquainted according to Aristotle in his Magicus and Deinon in the 5th Book of his History (both of the Fourth Century B.C.)... Aristotle in the First Book of his Dialogue on Philosophy declares the Magi to be more ancient than the Egyptians, and further that they believe in two principles, the Good Spirit and the Evil Spirit, the one called Zeus or Oromazdes, and the other Hades or Aremanius... (Theopompus in his Philippica) says that according to the Magi men will live in a future life and be immortal and that their invocations ensure the permanence of the world. This is again confirmed by Eudemus, the Rhodion (Fourth Century B.C.). Hecataeus (of Miletus, Sixth Century B.C.) adds that according to them, gods as well as men are born and have a beginning in time. Clearchus of Soli (pupil of Aristotle, according to Mr. R. D. Hicks) in his work on Education further makes the (Indian) Gymnosophists [45] out to have been descendants of the Magi and some trace the Jews to the

[45] Diogenes wrote this account in vindication of his opening thesis that "Philosophy was said to have owed its origin to foreigners. Thus the Persians had the Magians, the Babylonians or Assyrians the Chaldeans, the Indians the Gymnosophists, the Kelts and Galatians the Druids and Semnothei, as Aristotle says in his *Magicus* and Sotion in the 23rd Book of his *Diadoxe*."

same origin also. Furthermore, those who have written about the Magi criticise Herodotus. They urge that Xerxes would never have cast javelins at the Sun nor have bound the sea with fetters,[46] since in the creed of the Magi, sun and sea are gods. But that statues of the gods would be destroyed was natural enough."

148. This is a fairly judicial statement of the Magian case, but not clearly altogether sympathetic to the Magians, for it contains shrewd and maliciously bantering thrusts at their expense. But so far from being shown up as witch-doctors and *shamans*, they are made out in it to have been rather advanced specimens of theosophists, considering the age. "Diviners" and "occultists," they notoriously were, but so have been other quite advanced and admittedly "superior" peoples of even later ages, including the Greeks and the Romans. Nor were the Persian Kavis the unsophisticated and credulous innocents Dr. Moulton's speculations would lead one to suppose they were. The Naotara Kavi Vishtaspa, it will be seen later,[47] could not have taken up Zarathustra's faith and all it implied without an intelligent appreciation of the economic and other material

[46] Diogenes's authorities were out so far as concerned the sea. Xerxes behaved as a true Magian in seeking to enchain the "briny" Hellespont (Herodotus VII. 34).

[47] See para. 166, note (54) to para. 180 and paras. 182, 207-210.

advantages its adoption promised for him as ruler and chief, and without substantial and quite sensible adaptations of that faith to suit the accustomed outlook of himself and his Kavi following. The purposes he and Zoroaster had in view happened to find common grounds, but could not have been coincident from the very beginning at all points. They had to be so made by agreement.

149. The materials and circumstances considered above not only make it abundantly clear that Zoroaster was building up his scheme of reforms upon Magian foundations, and primarily in the interest of the Magian brotherhood to whom he stood as *zaotar* or priestly leader, but the quotation from Diogenes in particular establishes further that Zoroaster had no reason whatever to be ashamed of his Magian affinities, and still less of his position as priestly leader of the Magian brotherhood.[48]

[48] In further confirmation of the above conclusion, reference may be usefully made to Dinkard IX. Ch. XLV. 2-3 (in XXXVIII Sacred Books of the East) which give the following abstract of the contents of the Varstmansar Nask bearing on the family of the Spitamas: "About the glory of a family of some houses that has come to the Spitamas, even before the coming of Zaratust ; the knowledge of and habit of organisation and priestly authority of those arising from that family, the existence therein of houses, villages, communities and districts, its attracting and exalting mankind from vice to virtue, by propriety of words and actions, and it convinces those of the world

§ 3. *Zoroaster's Special Contributions. The Yasna Haptanghaiti Core of Pre-Zoroastrian Magianism.*

150. A comparison of the Gathas, specially of those of Zarathustra's authorship, with the Yasna Haptanghaiti enables us to separate and isolate Zarathustra's special contributions to Magian theosophy. This Yasna is in prose, but its dialect is as old as that of the Gathas. Apart from this, whilst every post-Zoroastrian reference to Zoroaster makes a legendary hero of him even in the Yasnas, the Yasna Haptanghaiti omits all reference to him in a way which suggests absence of knowledge even of his existence. No doubt he is mentioned in what on the face of it is a post-Zoroastrian postscript, for the seven Yashts of this "Seven-Chapter-Yasna" obviously ends where it is shown as ending in Dr. Mill's translation in the Sacred Books of the East (Volume 31, p. 290, note 4).

151. The peculiarly Zarathustran contributions which emerge from this comparison are his doctrines of Evil, Hell and Redemption.

even till the arrival of the good religion. And this too, that the existence of Kai Vishtasp, of Spitama Zaratust and of Frashaostra of the Hvovas is owing to it." See para. 142 *supra.* and note (42) thereto. The Spitama family, like the family of the Hvovas, was obviously a family of Magian "Kinsman-lords" such as are referred to in Ys. XL. 6 of the Yasna Haptanghaiti.

152. The exhortations addressed to the consciences of men and women of the brotherhood who are striving, each in his own way, to conquer the Daevas, which find expression in the Yasna Haptanghaiti, become in Zarathustra's teachings a dynamic arraying for war of all the forces making for good wherever found under the banner of Ahura, in order to smite down and utterly confound for all time the forces of evil which appeared to manifest themselves typically, first, in the activities of the Daeva-worshippers, secondly, in the very character they too often ascribed to their Daevas, and lastly, in the abominations which attended their worship. Hell and the Devil, more or less hypothetical entities in pre-Zoroastrian Magianism, became stern realities to be fought down and wiped away from the face of creation. Satan took concrete shape as the organising chief and leader of all that was evil and as the determined foe and arch-enemy of Ahura in the Zarathustran personation of the *Druj* or Anghra Mainyu. His Regeneration or Redemption of the World, the "Kingdom to come" of his prophesying, was not a distant dream or ideal, still less an Utopian refuge for over-sensitive unworldly imaginations. It was that for which all good men were imperiously commanded to prepare immediately, and having done so, to strive for incessantly, so as to avoid the common ruin which would overtake and overwhelm the

good and the bad alike, should, through the slackening of these efforts, the Devil succeed in obtaining the upper hand. The future held out in prospect was Regeneration or Damnation of Mankind in general and of the individual members of the species. There was no third alternative. Zarathustra's doctrine of Hell, Evil and Redemption was, for good or ill, his special contribution not to Magianism only but to the history of religion itself as a whole [see note (102) *infra*. *Cf*. Ys. XXX, LI, in particular].

153. These were new ideas not to be found in the Yasna Haptanghaiti. But they not only did no run counter to it; they were on the other hand entirely conformable to its spirits [see note (98) *infra*].

154. Passing from the Zarathustran Gathas to the Yasna Haptanghaiti, I have not at all felt (as according to Dr. Moulton I should have done) that I was back again amongst the old nature deities. The Yasna Haptanghaiti is utterly lacking in the refinedly concrete and joyously poetical paganism of the Vedic hymns and allied compositions to be found in the Avestan Yashts. Except that it contains no denunciation stuff, it is as abstract and sombre in spirit as the Zarathustran Gathas. The spirit of the Yasna is nearer indeed to that of the Upanisads (as also is that of the Zarathustran Gathas) than it is to the spirit of the

Vedic hymns.[49] In Appendix A, I give an abstract of the Yasna Haptanghaiti to enable the reader to determine for himself the true family relationship of this Yasna. It is more of kin to the Gathas than to the Yashts proper, some of which (not all) will be found to be as joyously pagan in conception and execution as the Vedic hymns themselves. It is possible and quite intelligible that the evangelist in Zoroaster might have laid more stress upon the abstract than upon the concreter aspects of the Amesha personations. But for all that, the Zoroastrian Gathas not only did not deny the Yasna Haptanghaiti ; the Zarathustran doctrines of Evil, Hell and Regeneration propounded in them appear in character to be no more than incrustations upon the core of pre-Zoroastrian Magianism as it is found compactly summarised for ritualistic purposes in the Seven-Chapter-Yasna. They were the products evidently too of the ferment that had been stirred within that very core by the spirit of rebellion which the grievous wrongs of the brotherhood had awakened within Zarathustra's priestly consciousness. Ahura and the Amesha Spentas furnish

[49] The basic differences between the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic conceptions have formed a subject for consideration by me in my book, "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)," at pp. 49-51 and pp. 167-169, amongst others, and in an article entitled "*Some Reflections on Indian Castes*" contributed by me in 15 *Man in India*, pp. 27 ff.

the common nucleus round which Zarathustra's doctrines of Evil, Hell and Regeneration are made to cohere in the same relation of subordination as affect the praises and invocations embodied in the Yasna. There is a difference in literary flavour and also in the appeal the Gathas make to the mental faculties of the Faithful due to a new technique which appears to have unfolded itself in the prophet's consciousness and proved at the same time to be suitable for developing and propagating his new doctrines. This "question-answer" technique evolved by Zarathustra will come up for consideration in its proper context in Appendix B.

155. Intense pre-occupation over and perfervid denunciation of wrong and evil, tempered even though it may be by apocalyptic visions of an entirely new Heaven and Earth which will finally emerge when evil has been completely overcome and eliminated, has come to form an integral part of some of the ruling religious creeds of historic times. Nevertheless, it would be well to bear in mind that this by no means is a natural or normal phase in the evolution of religious ideas. Excessive pre-occupation over evil may take and has repeatedly taken a decidedly pathological turn.

156. The whole idea of Evil and Hell centering round a Prince of Darkness uncompromisingly arrayed against God and his beneficent purposes has again, I venture to suggest, never had any but

a pathological origin. It has arisen and is seen to have matured in the only two known historical instances as a reaction against a long-nursed and grievously experienced feeling of political and social oppression.

157. An acute consciousness of the enormities of evil-doing and sin, however necessary to some minds this may appear to be for the evolution to the right pitch of the moral consciousness of mankind, has never really arisen out of healthy social conditions. It is always the down-trodden and disinherited, scarcely ever the prosperous, far less the oppressing lords and masters, who have been the first to attain to this acuteness of moral consciousness. The Hebrew mind became keenly cognisant of the unholiness of evil-doing during periods of its Bondage, and (except for the short interval which marked the temporarily successful experiments in monarchy of Saul, David and Solomon), the role of the oppressed has been widely conceded to have belonged specially to the Hebrew people. But the Magians present, relatively speaking, an even acuter case, a fact which still awaits recognition from historians of civilization and culture. The Magians, before they found their priestly leaders installed as "*zaotars*" or "*mobeds*" to the Achaemenian and Sassanian Persian royal houses (this too did not make them anything like the rulers and controllers of their own destinies), appear never to have

experienced even the Hebrews' one brief chance of lording over their own lot and thus missed the great lesson which the Hebrews derived from getting and then losing that chance.[50] On account of this wholesome experience, the Hebrew prophets (unlike Zoroaster) could not be content self-satisfiedly to attribute all the nations' woes and sufferings exclusively to other peoples' sins, and their denunciations thus came to be directed even more sharply against their own shortcomings and sins than against those of their oppressors, which they even taught themselves to view as scourges chosen in his inscrutable providence by God himself for punishing the Hebrew peoples' transgressions against his ordinances. This lesson, Zaruthustra having missed, there is found in his denunciations a note of self-righteousness, the absence of which in the like denunciations of the Hebrew prophets is, from the moral point of view, a feature all in the latters' favour.

[50] A people who ever had the experience of governing themselves would never have perpetrated the fantastic inequalities between crimes and punishments which mark the provisions in that behalf in the Vendidad (see Darmesteter's summary of them in 4 Sacred Books of the East, first edition, at pp. xcvii-c). Similar inequalities, not quite as fantastic, are observeable in the Hindu Dharmaśāstras. Contrast these with the provisions of purely secular Codes like Hammurabi's.

§ 4. *The Dakhma Exposure of the Dead and the Kheluk-das Marriage Doctrine of the Magians.*

158. The records we have examined show that the Magian *zaotars* were culturally quite advanced, relatively to the times, from before Zoroaster's appearance ; and this Dr. Moulton himself would not have failed to discern but for the manifestly strong prejudices he had come to entertain against them owing to two institutions which appear to have specially excited his aversion, namely, the *dakhma* (exposing the dead to be devoured by carrion birds and animals) and the advocacy by them of *khetuk-das* marriages amongst very near relations (between mother and son, and father and daughter, and brother and sister, to be specific).

159. Regarding the *dakhma*, it is enough to say that it is prejudice only which still sees in burial a form of disposing of corpses which is superior to every other. To hand over one's dead friends and relations to microbes and maggots, to breed and fester upon, is surely infinitely worse than making over these sources of corruption to be cleaned up and made innocuous by nature's own scavengers. The reasons which I have already urged for supposing that this presumably was the orthodox Proto-Aryan practice which survived among the Magians require no repetition.[51]

[51] See paras. 96-98 *supra* ; that exposure of the dead preceded burial as a form of disposing of the dead

160. The *khetuk-das* (next-of-kin-marriage, as it is translated) is not so easily disposed of.

161. According to Herodotus, it was Cambyses, the son of Cyrus the Great and the predecessor of Darius Hystaspes, who started the brother-sister marriage in the Achaemenian royal house. From the same account, it further appears that the idea of d ing it occurred to him and was carried into execution by him in Egypt when he had completed his conquest of that country and as the result thereof found himself installed on the throne of the Pharaohs. The brother-sister marriage had already by that time come to be the settled custom in the houses of the Pharaohs, dynasty after dynasty.

162. In the coastal regions of the Eastern Mediterranean, a similar practice appears to have been prevalent in those and earlier times amongst holders of high sacerdotal offices (whether priests' or kings'), if not amongst the population in general. Sir J. G. Frazer supposes that this was owing to the wide prevalence in these regions of mother-kin succession. The custom of brother marrying the sister would arise in such societies from a desire to keep the offices or honours from

amongst many who finally adopted the burial custom is proved by the many traces left in widely separated areas in both the Old and the New Worlds of secondary burials which consisted in the burying of the bones only in urns after the same had been denuded of the soft tissues by exposure to carrion birds and animals and to the weather.

passing out of the family. A father of a daughter under the mother-kin succession, stood the chance of ceasing to officiate as priest or king and participate in the honours and emoluments of the office on his wife predeceasing him ; and this circumstance might exceptionally lead even to the father marrying the daughter. But the motive does not suffice for the mother marrying the son in any conceivable contingency even in such societies. The motive had to be a strong enough one to overcome the natural aversion men and women in general feel to cohabiting with relations with whom they have lived in close familiarity from childhood, and had in each case to be reinforced by special religious sanctions or sophistries. The Pharaohs' case certainly was an instance in point. Cambyses, I feel confident, did not marry his sisters to satisfy the perverted lust of a criminal lunatic, which in several respects he appears to have been. He did this, on becoming Pharaoh, for the sake of conforming to a custom which was so strongly backed by time-honoured sacred local traditions as to make its observance necessary for legitimising the rule of a usurping foreign dynasty in the eyes of the local population. The constraint of these traditions operated with equal force, if with less justification, in the Hellenic house of Ptolemies, which established itself in Egypt after Alexander's death.

163. That this was so appears clearly from the precaution Cambyses took of consulting the Persian

judges before taking this unusual step. They unanimously reported that this would be contrary to Persian custom, but that the royal will exceptionally was a law unto itself. There is clear evidence that Magian intellectuals already held high offices in Persian Royal households since the time of the Naotaride Vishtaspa, Zoroaster's contemporary and patron ; and this was natural, for an empire of the dimensions and character of the one evolved and left by Cyrus could not have been built up and run without such assistance by a ruling people whose whole education in youth consisted in learning to ride, to shoot the arrow and to speak the truth without fear or favour. It is therefore by no means improbable that the panel of judges whom Cambyses consulted had Magians if not Magian *zaotars* in it.[52] The report in that case would be evidence in itself that the Magians had not taken to advocating *khetuk-das* at its date. But apart from this hypothesis, it is hardly likely that Herodotus who was so circumstantial in tracing the origin of the brother-sister marriage in the Achaemenian house and who found occasion to note so many peculiarities concerning the Magi would

[52] See Herodotus 1. 135-136. In Sassanian times, the superintendence of justice and the highest offices of state are found to be committed to "*mobeds*" (priests, Magians). Darmesteter, 4 Sacred Books of the East, First Edn., c.

have omitted to notice the prevalence of the custom amongst the Magians if they had been practising it amongst themselves, or to take note of their open advocacy of it in their teachings had they already started doing this before his times.

164. Strabo (First Century B.C.) however has put it down in black and white that it was the Magians and not the Persians who "by ancestral custom mated with their mothers." But this piece of information was amongst those which he, a native of Pontus, was not prepared to vouch for as true to his own knowledge and which he took care to note he had picked up from books of history. This is tantalising, seeing that he has not even named his authority. Very probably it was the same Sotion of Alexandria who flourished in the Third Century B. C. whom Diogenes has quoted as his authority for the reflexion that "the Magians saw no impiety in marriage with a mother or a daughter." The only other authority referred to in Dr. Moulton's compilation of texts, Xanthus the Lydian is stated to have charged the Magians with indiscriminate promiscuity, which is extremely unsatisfactory as evidence ; it proves altogether too much.

165. There is thus Sotion as reported by Diogenes against Herodotus. But Sotion's opinion is quoted in a context which was concerned with the opinions and views said to have been held by the Magians and not in one concerning itself with

the customs which they observed in practice. The passage was meant for a sarcastic reflection upon the Magians as self-righteously pretentious expounders of affectedly high ideals of virtue and good conduct, who yet "could *see* no impiety" in marriages between parents and children. In point of fact, later Pahlavi sacred literature (the authors whereof were undoubtedly Magians) became notorious for their blatant advocacy of *khetuk-das* marriages in those its most strongly reprobated forms.[53] It is probable that this doctrinal propaganda in favour of *khetuk-das* marriages had been already openly started by the Magians when Sotion came to write his history. It being fairly clear, however, that the *khetuk-das* doctrine was unknown, even in theory, amongst both the Persians and the Magians, until at least Cambyses's time, what, it may be asked, could have been the real genesis of this extraordinarily zealous advocacy of it by the Magian *zaotars* in Sotion's time, and later after the Mahommedan conquest of Persia by their *mobed* successors ?

166. Before I take up this question for answer, I deem it desirable to note here in anticipation my considered opinion, the reasons whereof will appear in due course, that there can

[53] See Appendix C for a note on the Pahlavi texts bearing upon *khetuk-das*, paragraphs 330-337, *post*.

be no more mistaken notion than to suppose that Zarathustra was, in at least the later and maturer phase of his proselytising activities, a doctrinaire and a zealot who would admit no compromise in matters of religious and social observances, and sanction no departures which did not strictly accord with his own fixed ideas of what was religiously and morally praiseworthy. He will be found to have been a social reformer and statesman primarily and a religious reformer as a necessary but secondary condition or consequence thereof. By regarding him as nothing but the founder of a new religion (which too, I have shown, he was not altogether, founding as he did his doctrines all upon Magian materials), history so far has, to my mind, been viewing him and his doctrines in an entirely false perspective. He would not have been looking for a royal patron of his scheme of reform in the camp of his very enemies (whom he had been denouncing all the time as the chosen battalion of the Druj in its unholy resistance of the will of Ahura) and would, in any case, not have won him as the chief executor and mainstay of his reforms had he not been reasonable himself and prepared for making reasonable compromises. He, it will be seen, knew well, none better, that the only way in which the essentials of his teaching could win their way amongst the people who counted most for the success of his plans was to yield to the customs,

views and opinions of the latter in matters which left the essence of his teachings and preachings in substance untouched. The Magians in making further compromises from the same motives after his death were but following an example which he himself had set and by which he had attained visible and even crowning success, far beyond the dreams of the early days of his ministry. To read in these measures of sane syncretism, indications of a "counter-reformation," is to misunderstand both Zoroaster and his successors in the ministry.

167. Amongst the concessions which Magianism had to make to Iranian Kavi prejudices, the most outstanding was its toleration of the custom of burials in their Achaemenian converts' house, if not amongst the Persians generally. Knowing this to have been so, apparently from Zoroaster's time, I cannot avoid suspecting that the Magian advocacy of *khetuk-das* was another compromise allowed in the interest, and it might be at the express request, of the members of the Royal Achaemenian house themselves—not indeed by Zoroaster himself (for the event could not have happened before the Egyptian conquest of Cambyses who flourished a century or so at least after Zoroaster) but by a successor of his in the ministry.

168. The brother-sister marriage which Cambyses had to adopt in the Achaemenian house of

Persian Kings to secure its hold upon the recently conquered throne of the Pharaohs had to have some kind of authoritative sanction which would reconcile his Persian subjects to it. Such sanction could not be found without resort to some kind or other of doctrinal reasoning. What kind of doctrinal reasoning suggested itself to the Magian custodians of the conscience of the Persian royal house will be found outlined in Appendix C. Suffice it to say here that it had to take a form which could not stop in any case with the brother-sister marriage. It had to take into its scope the parent-child marriages as well. The Mahommedan conquest appears to have furnished new grounds for a revival of the propaganda, but this time apparently in the interest of first-cousin and not brother-sister marriages (see Appendix C, *post*, paras. 330-337).

169. I cannot suppose that I shall be wrong in assuming that, despite the zeal the Magians affected in their advocacy of *khetuk-das* in every form of it, outside the royal house it was not practised at any time even amongst brothers and sisters by either the Persians or the Magians. The Parsis and the resident Zoroastrians of Persia who have throughout adhered so faithfully to the practices sanctioned by their scriptures in almost every other particular are never known to have practised *khetuk-das* marriages amongst nearer relations than first cousins, and they strongly

repudiate the charge that they or their ancestors have ever practised it. There is every reason to suppose that it was the descendants of the Magians and not their Iranian converts who stood resolutely by their ancient religion through obloquy and oppression after the Mahommedan conquest. If *khetuk-das* marriages between relations nearer than first cousins had been an ancestral custom actually and habitually practised by the Magians, one would have expected to find some survival of them amongst their uncommonly conservative descendants, the modern Zoroastrians of India and Persia.

170. It is noteworthy that Strabo mentions only the mother-son marriage and Diogenes both the forms of the parent-child marriage, but the brother-sister marriage receives no specific mention from either. If actually practised, it would have been this last which would have most frequently occurred and attracted attention. Sotion, the common authority apparently of both these writers, must have selected the most reprehensible hypothetical applications of the doctrine for discrediting its propounders in reference to the claim put forward on their behalf that they were theosophical and moral teachers and preachers of outstanding sanctity and eminence. He was passing no reflections upon customs observed as being actually practised by the Magians themselves or by anybody else [see *ante*, para. 147 and note (45)].

171. But even assuming that the Magians did practise *khetuk-das* in one or other of these extreme forms without incurring social odium in their own community, I do not see why in a scientific appraisement of their contributions to culture, this fact alone should be considered sufficient to drag them down to the cultural level of African and Trans-Caspian savages of modern and ancient times (as it has appeared to do, in Dr. Moulton's estimation) in total disregard of the many praiseworthy traits that belonged to them according to the testimony of not too sympathetic foreign observers, fully confirmed as they are by their own scriptural literature. *Khetuk-das* like the *dakhma*, for aught one knows, might have been very ancient and orthodox grass-land nomad practice, to judge at least from the lack of hesitation which is seen to have marked the Vedic Aryan seer's glorification of Pūṣan as the "lover (*jāra*) of his sister and husband of his mother," in the passage I have previously quoted (para. 47 *ante*).

172. My verdict, however, upon the evidence and circumstances, taken as a whole, is that *khetuk-das* marriage between nearer relations than first cousins still stands unproven as a custom at any time actually practised by the Magians amongst themselves, either before or after Zoroaster.

§ 5. *Language and Racial Affinities of the Magians.*

173. I have agreed with Dr. Moulton's conclusion that the Magians were, relatively to the Iranian immigrant people, the indigenous population of Media.

174. Dr. Moulton quotes from Tiele in support of his view that the indigenous population of Media who were subjugated by the Aryans spoke a language of the same family as the Elamitic, and Dr. Moulton would even have it that all the Median tribes mentioned by Herodotus, save and except the Aryan Persians (Arizanti), were integral parts of this "indigenous Elamitic population." The chain of reasoning which leads him to that conclusion is however this; (*i*) Cambyses, on being informed of the palace rebellion at Ecbatana which had set up as King in his place a person who was personating as Smerdis (his brother whom Cambyses had already caused to be murdered), appears from Herodotus' account to have immediately expressed the fear that the kingdom might be passing back to the Medians. (*ii*) The seven months' rule of Gaumata the Magian who in fact was personating as this false Smerdis had, according to the same account, been quite *popular*. Dr. Moulton has argued that Gaumata's rule would not have been "*popular,*" if it did not signify the triumph of the "indigenous *population*" over the alien ruling power. *Ergo*, the

entire *population* of Media, save and except the ruling Persians, were the indigenous (*pace* Tiele) Elamitic-speaking population. What facile history-making, by *double entendre* and *petitio principii* combined, this surely is!

175. The reason of the popularity of the false Smerdis's rule, as specified by Herodotus himself, was that immediately upon his accession he issued proclamations exempting all the natives under Persian rule from military service and payment of tribute for three whole years!

176. But Dr. Moulton speaks of other "cognate indications" pointing to the same conclusion. The only one he however actually mentions is the fact that the tri-lingual inscriptions of Darius in Behistun in Media are found to have been in the three languages, namely, Persian, Elamitic-Susian and Assyrian. Dr. Moulton has no doubt that these inscriptions in the three principal languages current in Darius's Asiatic empire were all meant for domestic consumption by people residing in Media, since Behistun appears to have been *geographically* within the Media of Darius's days, whence it plainly appeared to him that there were Susian-Elamitic people and Assyrians *amongst the settled population of Media* besides the ruling Persians. Therefore, the Persians being Persians and the Assyrians Assyrians, the Susian language of the third inscription was the spoken language of the rest of the population!

177. Could Dr. Moulton who, I find, has read Professor Williams Jackson's "Persia, Past and Present" with the grateful appreciation which every reader of the book feels towards it, really have persuaded himself that the people who resided in Media in Darius's days found it convenient to pay intermittent visits to the Behistun Rocks for the pleasures of picnic and the profits of studying history in inscriptions at the same time? To suggest again that the Medians (who broke the Assyrian power and for half a century at least thereafter ruled an empire which embraced Media and Assyria and extended further to the east and west of these countries, till it fell before the stronger Persian power led by the organising genius of Cyrus the Great) were the aboriginal Elamitic ruling people of this part of the world, risen again out of the charred remains of their pre-historic greatness, needed about as much courage as must have been called for for the further suggestion which Dr. Moulton has put forward that the Avesta written entirely in the dialects of a tongue closely allied to Sanskrit, with no discoverable trace in it of Elamitic deposits, was either not the scriptural literature of the Magians, who simply stole it from their Persian conquerors and made it their own; or was the scripture of a people (the Magians) who went on speaking all throughout their aboriginal Susian-Elamitic language till so late as the days of Darius

Hystaspes, and this unnoticed altogether by the Hellenic writers previously mentioned, Asiatics though they were nearly all of them ![54]

178. It is surely fantastic to suggest that the trilingual Behistun inscriptions were meant for purely local consumption within the *then* Persian province of Media, for a knowledge of the scripts or of any one of them must have been at the time a rare accomplishment. They were written in the three great representative languages of the Asiatic empire of Darius in order to enable all his subjects and posterity to be helped to acquaint themselves with the memorable occurrences recorded in them for all time, his successors being expressly enjoined, under a curse, to "publish the edict to

[54] According to Darmesteter (4 Sacred Books of the East, First Edn., pp. lii-liii), the Gathas were composed in a dialect which was different from the dialect of the Behistun inscriptions. He appears to have considered the Gathas to have been the language in use [whether as literary or spoken language (see note (57), *post*) he has not considered] amongst the Magians, which indeed is the only supposition open to be made in the case. As to the language spoken by the Medes, the two bilingual inscriptions (in Assyrian and Median), dated 800 B.C. and 714 B.C., respectively, left by Adad-nirari IV and Sargon, to celebrate in each case the subjugation and capture of a Median king, conclusively prove what indeed had never been in doubt that the Medes spoke an Iranian dialect closely allied to Sanskrit (see Conder, "Rise of Man," p. 96).

the people." Of the three inscriptions, the one in Susian only specifically described Ahura as the "God of the Aryans." Is it reasonable to suppose that the local Elamitic-speaking population would stand in need of being specifically apprised of that locally notorious fact? The Persians of course did not need any introduction to them of their own God. And the Assyrians too knew Ahura well enough, seeing that it was they who had lent to Ahura the name and many of the attributes of their own national deity Assur, as has been pointed out in the previous chapter. It must have been the far away Susians only (who presumably did not know Ahura either from first-hand knowledge or by report) who would require to be told who this Ahura Giver of Victory to Darius might have been. Dr. Moulton has used this introduction of Ahura (to the Susians) as "the God of the Aryans" to draw his strange conclusion previously noticed that Zoroaster, whose God also Ahura appeared from the Gathas to have been, must therefore from that one token alone have been an Aryan and an Arizanti noble like Darius himself. The only legitimate inference to draw from the occurrence of the passage in the Susian inscription alone, namely, that there were no native Elamitic people resident in or near the country of the inscriptions, speaking the Susian amongst all the dialects of the Elamitic language, did not occur to him at all.

179. With reference to the Gaumata "rebellion," Dr. Moulton has in some contexts thrown out the alternative suggestion that the rebellion was a Magian "uprising," to support which inference he cited the fact left recorded by Herodotus that Darius restored several temples which Gaumata the Magian usurper had during his brief reign destroyed. But the outstanding and quite decisive fact which Dr. Moulton overlooks in this connection is that Gaumata had been all throughout passing himself off[55] as Smerdis, the other son of Cyrus the Great, and therefore as a blue-blooded scion of the Achaemenian royal house. The success of a scheme of usurpation so conceived depended in a special manner upon a total concealment from all but the conspirators themselves of his identity and in particular of his having been a low Magian (a member in Dr. Moulton's view, and mine, of the very lowest stratum of Median society), and the story of the detection of the fraud as told by Herodotus shows that no pains were spared to ensure this concealment. The "uprising" itself

[55] To be precise, he had been doing so at the instigation of his brother, an official in the royal household, into whose hands he had lent himself to be used as a puppet. There were rebellions organised by the Median nobility in both Darius's and Xerxes's reigns, as Cambyses had apprehended there would be; but Gaumata's palace rebellion was not one of them; and Cambyses's first guess that it was, proved incorrect.

had in fact to take the very best possible care not to avow itself publicly as having been patriotically conceived in the interest of either the Medians whom the Persians had displaced from power or of the Magians, the proletarians of Median society. It was a palace conspiracy pure and simple, and not a "rebellion" or "uprising" of any kind whatsoever. The destruction of the temples again might no doubt have been due to Gaumata having been by birth, breeding and sentiment a Magian, whatever he might have been pretending to be in the public eye. The character of the usurpation however leaves no room for supposing that he was posing openly as a "kinsman-lord" of the Magian brotherhood, in the language of the Gatha Haptanghaiti, when he set himself to destroying those temples.

180. As to the kind of temples Gaumata destroyed and Darius restored, Herodotus's account furnishes no indications. Both the Persians (*cf.* Vedic Aryans) and the Magians were aniconists. And yet the contrasting behaviours of Gaumata and the Achaemenian kings, in relation to the religious ideas and institutions of the non-Zoroastrian population of the empire, cannot but suggest reflections pointing to a fundamental difference between the Persian and the Magian characters. The Magians had ever been the under-dogs in Median social and political history, and this circumstance had made them a rather close-knit

exclusive community suspicious of outsiders and disposed to be fanatically intolerant of foreign ideas and institutions, as appears to be entirely borne out by the Avesta. The Persians, on the other hand, according to Herodotus's testimony, were by nature confirmed eclectics. "Of all nations," he notes, "the Persians were the most ready to adopt foreign ideas (I.135)." They appear to have been receptive of foreign ways even to a fault, in Herodotus's view; and Cambyses's ready adoption of the Pharaohnic custom of brother-sister marriage itself furnishes an apt illustration of it. Cyrus the Great's liberal attitude towards the Jews drew fulsome encomiums from their prophets (*e.g.*, Ezra, 2 Isaiah), and history records instances of similar liberal treatment by him of the Babylonians and other subject nations and their institutions. His treatment of the Jews at any rate could not have been dictated from profit-making calculations. Darius who appears from his inscriptions to have been a devout worshipper of Ahura was also remarkably liberal; and the acts of iconoclasm cited against Xerxes by later Greek writers like Diogenes clearly appear from Herodotus's accounts to have been incited by revenue considerations to which the expensive foreign policies of his father and himself had very naturally given rise. Unlike the Magians and the Jews, the Persians had always been the favourites of fortune, so that there

is no cause to be surprised at this their naturally kindly, liberal and open treatment of their subject peoples, who could not have held together so long under Persian hegemony but for this liberal treatment, amongst other reasons. Nor is there any ground (for the identical reason) for charging Herodotus and Xenophon with exaggeration when they credited the Persians of all nations with another very praiseworthy trait, their truthfulness. They only amongst the ancient nations had been so uniformly favoured by the presiding Genius of Victory that they alone and none others could afford always to speak the truth and shame the devil. The Persians appear to have been as fanatical in their practice of this virtue as the Magians were doctrinally emphatic in praising it.[56]

56 Zarathustra's patron, Kavi Vishtaspa, if not a Persian by birth and breeding like Cyrus, certainly demonstrated himself to have been a thorough-going Persian by temperament. His acceptance of the Zoroastrian creed (at the price again of Zoroaster's corresponding acceptance of the best elements of the native Iranian faith) showed a breadth of outlook, teachability and eclecticism of the truly Persian order. It is specially noticeable, as a proof of Kavi Vishtaspa's teachability and broad realism (so like Cyrus's), that he became easily and completely convinced of the high economic and social value to the State (as inculcated by Zoroaster) of the lowest stratum of his subjects, the producing agriculturists, and conducted himself so towards them from set policy that a follower of Vishtaspa (*Vishtaspano*) came to be regarded in the religious

181. Before passing on, I feel constrained to make another reflection, and that is that fanatical hatred of other people's gods and their worshippers is not a natural and normal trait of human character. This is found in history to have been genetically associated always with that mordant variety of the Doctrine of Evil which, as already indicated, takes root and thrives in the hearts only of communities like the Jews and the Magians who had been subjected by unkind fate to long-drawn and chronic oppression. It is for this reason that the Jews and the Magians evolved into the earliest iconoclasts known to history. The disease however is also proved by history to be one which is psychologically extremely catching. Instances of infective iconoclasm will easily occur to the reader. The only one I need mention in the present context is that of some of the Sassanian Kings who, under Magian schooling no doubt, some centuries later, lent themselves readily to the latter's scheme of fanatical suppression of rival doctrines and institutions.

182. And yet it must not be supposed that all the Sassanian Kings allowed themselves to be led and directed in such matters by their *mobeds*. History provides ample testimony that they did not ; and there is no instance of an Achaemenian

traditions of later times as "the fortress and stronghold and homestead (*khan*) of the agricultural peasant." Dinkard, IX, Chap, 26 (37 S. B. E., p. 316).

monarch ever having allowed himself to be steered and piloted about by *zaotars* and *athravans* ; and indeed one of the points which I hope conclusively to establish in the course of this thesis is that Zarathustra himself, so far from presenting himself to King Vishtaspa as a John Knox kind of reforming zealot, conducted himself towards him in all respects as a person of broad views. Not only did he not in his new position as the King's Chaplain conduct himself as a bigot ; he clearly appears to have been able, before he died, to impart a considerable measure of his own tolerant outlook to his habitually narrow-minded fellow-*zaotars*. There is no reason whatever for supposing either, that the Iranian Kavis were unsophisticated innocents who allowed themselves and their institutions to receive just whatever impress the Magian *zaotars* chose to stamp upon them. A significant verse in the Yasnas (Yasna IX. 24) provides an interesting and decisive illustration of the attitude which Iranian nobles, even when to all appearances economically and morally convinced of the soundness of the Zoroastrian scheme of reforms and favourably disposed towards it in theory, were apt to assume towards over-zealous preachers of the Zoroastrian creed of social amelioration, backed as it was by the promise of eternal heaven to those favourably disposed towards it and eternal damnation to its opponents. This Yasna recounts how Haoma had " lowered

Keresani and dethroned him from his throne, for he had grown so very fond of power that he had treacherously said : No priest behind (without his leave and license, that is to say) shall walk the lands for me as a counsellor to prosper them ; he would, if he did so, rob everything of progress and crush the growth of all,'' a doctrine which I remember having seen as vigorously enunciated in many recent state documents in India but in scarcely apter language. It is impossible not to sympathise with Keresani in his apparently unsuccessful struggles against these primitive Zoroastrian Lollards, whom Zoroaster must have found as difficult to control and guide as did Wycliffe to control and guide his ragamuffin following of preaching inciters of sedition and unrest. If Zoroaster had not found his Constantine in King Vishtaspa, and proved the soundness of his own more liberal methods to demonstration by the success he achieved within his own life-time, I have the gravest doubts in my own mind if he could have left behind him followers to work out his plans to completion on lines chalked out by him, in the manner his successors in the ministry are seen to have gone on doing for several centuries after his death.

183. It must be perfectly clear by now to the reader that the native language of this close-knit and highly conservative lowest stratum of Median society, the Magians, must all through have been

Aryan. Indeed nobody ever doubted this fact before Dr. Moulton started his Susian-Elamitic hare. This by itself, even if the tell-tale *dakhma* be excluded from consideration as a freak and not a grass-land nomad survival, should lead one to conclude that they were a much earlier overflow from the northern grass-lands than the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans and the Iranians (the Medes as well as the Persians of history), thrown off from their original *habitat* by the first catastrophic shrinkage of the grass-land pasturage.[57] In Media,

[57] The curious fact noticed by scholars that passages from the Vedas and the Avesta placed side by side for comparison, upon critical examination, often disclose the Avestan to be linguistically the more archaic form, though the Vedic texts must have taken on fixed lineaments many many centuries before the Gathas, ceases to present any difficulties, if the Gathas be taken to have been by origin "Magian" and not "Iranian" scriptures, the view expressed in the text. That view leaves room for the supposition that Zarathustra composed his Gathas in an archaic language which the *zaotars* had to learn for understanding their scriptures as they had existed before Zarathustra's times, so that the most archaic forms that are to be met with in the Gathas might not have represented the spoken language of Zoroaster and his fellow Magians in his time. The language of the Gathas might well have been the literary language of the (Magian) priests in Zarathustra's time. To say that Zarathustra composed his Gathas in this literary language, it is hardly necessary to add, implies no reflection upon the morality of the proceeding, and I do not wish to be understood as suggesting that Zarathustra

they must have settled down amongst a local agricultural people (who for aught one knows might have been the ancestors of the Yezidis, a people who will form the subject of consideration in Chapter V of this book) and became agriculturists themselves. Whether in this new environment they became agriculturists pure and simple by having had to discard cattle-rearing owing to geographical conditions which they were unable to utilize for this purpose, or whether they were able to retain enough of it to start as agriculturists and shepherds at the same time (such as they are found to have been in Zarathustra's time), it is scarcely possible definitely to say upon the available materials. If the former was the case, they must have had to renew their acquaintance with their former animal friends and providers from specimens obtained by barter from thieving gypsy bands (whose contributions to the evolution of the culture of later ages still remains to be properly explored and appraised) or wrested and robbed from visiting or raiding nomads. Colour is lent to this latter hypothesis to some extent by the Yima legend recounted in the Vendidad to which more

in so doing deliberately intended to pass them off for what they were not in reality. The suggestion in any case, if made, would have refuted itself by its own grotesqueness. The Gathas of Zarathustra's composition are utterly straightforward in intention, however unsatisfactorily turned in expression [see note (90) *infra*].

detailed reference will be made hereafter (*post*, paras. 192, 194).

§ 6. *Syncretism in the Avesta.*

184. Taking it then as reasonably established that the Magians were for all practical purposes the first Aryan immigrants from the northern grass-lands to have settled and turned agriculturists in Media, the course of evolution of this people from that time on to when they fell under the observation of the Greek writers whose testimony I have considered, has to be gathered from the internal evidence furnished by the Avesta with such light as may be thrown upon the enquiry by comparison with the materials of the Vedic hymns and the extrinsic evidence furnished by inscriptions, including the Hommel inscription left by Assurbanipal, to which reference has been made several times already. Other materials, less directly connected, will come up for mention in their appropriate special contexts and need not be specifically mentioned at this place.

185. The materials referred to, meagre enough though they are, will nevertheless suffice to establish the highly syncretic character of the Avesta ; and an examination of these supplemented by a comparative study of the materials of the Avesta and of the Vedic hymns will enable us to segregate (*i*) The Assyrian borrowings ; (*ii*) What may be broadly

regarded as self-evolved Magian factors ; (*iii*) Pre-Zoroastrian Proto-Aryan survivals ; and (*iv*) Post-Zoroastrian Iranian intrusions.

(*a*) *Assyrian Borrowings.*

186. The Hommel inscriptions furnish conclusive testimony, as I have already shown in the previous chapter, that Ahura and the Amesha Spentas were Magian adaptations of the Assara Mazās and the Igigi of these inscriptions. The inscriptions oppose to the Igigi the malicious Earth Spirits, the Anunaki. The dualism which assumed such portentious dimensions in Zarathustra's doctrine of Hell and Evil and was apparently allowed to run to seeds in later Magianism (every single good thing in the universe being in it confronted as of course by its corresponding evil counterpart) was already implicit in these Assyrian borrowings. It is unnecessary to repeat here what has been already stated with reference to the Hommel inscriptions in the previous chapter.

(*b*) *Self-evolved Magian Factors.*

187. Of self-evolved Magian factors, the most characteristic to my mind is the conception of the *Fravashis*. They find honourable mention in the Yasna Haptanghaiti.[58] I shall immediately state

[58] The fact that the *Fravashis* are not mentioned in the Zarathustran Gathas has appeared to Dr. Moulton to

reasons why I consider it impossible for any cult of ancestor-worship to have originated amongst the northern nomads so long as they continued to be nomads. But ancestor-worship however originating was undoubtedly the nucleus round which grew the elaborate *Fravashi* cult of the Avesta ; and the Vedic Aryan *Pitṛ* cult, I have reasons for supposing, might well have been this same nucleus as it was taken over by the Vedic Aryans from the earlier Magianism with which they came into contact when they had not yet started from their first settled home in Iran on their eastward journey to the Panjab. If this ancestral cult could not have been brought by the Magians from their former grass-land *habitat*, it must follow that it was evolved by themselves or

justify the inference that Zarathustra intended to disown them. I have, I hope, been able to demonstrate that Zarathustra had built his theosophy not out of nothing but upon orthodox Magian foundations. But even apart from that, so little admitting of attribution to Zarathustra's authorship has survived, that this and other like inferences of repudiation of earlier doctrines on Zarathustra's part from his silence alone scarcely seem to be justified. The proper logical attitude of the modern investigator towards proved pre-Zoroastrian Magian elements should to my mind be to take them as integral parts of the Zoroastrian theosophy until the contrary should be proved by evidence, the onus of doing which should rest on the party who affirms that any particular item of it was repudiated by Zoroaster. [See note (98) and para. 299 *infra.*]

borrowed by them from their neighbours after they had settled in Media and been there converted into agriculturists with fixed homes.

188. Ancestor-worship has been very frequently assumed to have been a characteristically Aryan institution. But the grass-land nomads who had no fixed homes would have had no more reasons for taking thought of their dead relations than they would have had to do of their dead animals, throwing both away impartially for disposal to carrion birds and animals, as I believe them to have habitually done. The dead, whether human or animal, left nothing outstanding in the hands of the living either to cherish or to fear. It is only people with fixed homes whom their dead persistently stare in the face, demanding appeasement or conciliation first and later worship. The proper bestowal of the dead could hardly have been much of a problem to the nomads, supposing even that they would feel sufficient sentiment for their mortal remains to wish to preserve them from being torn by wolves and vultures by consigning them below the ground.

189. But nomads, so soon as they get fixed in homes as householders, are immediately called upon to face the problem of their dead, and settle it too in a manner which would be agreeable alike to themselves and to the spirits of the departed. The question of their dead friends and relations and their still hovering attendant spirits proves indeed

so difficult of solution as a rule that it tends almost invariably to become something like an obsession to the primitive householder, an obsession which does not cease to pursue him even after he has ceased to be primitive in every respect.

190. The Vedic Aryans, I have no doubt, would thus have had to evolve an independent doctrine of their Pitṛs for themselves, so soon as they became householders in their first settled homes in Iran. But their neighbours the Magians had already a long start over them in the matter, and there is evidence, persuasive even if slender, of borrowing by them from these neighhours in their common mythical figure of Yama-Yima, amongst others.

191. Yama is the first of men in the Rigveda ; and Yima, though he is not the first of men, is a great chief and the keeper and protector appointed by Ahura of the entire human race, in the Avesta. He is the son in both systems of a father of the same name (Vivasvat-Vivahvant). The Vedic Vivasvat does not appear to me to specifically suggest the Sun-god any more than does the Avestan Vivahvant.[59] He, according to Yasna

[59] Vivahvant, according to the Pahlavi Bundahis (XXXII.1), is the sixth in descent from Gayomard, the First Man (the third in descent according to Firdausi) and the third from Haoshyangha the Paradhata of the Yashts. Yima is thus the seventh (or fourth) in descent from the First Man and not the First of Men like Yama.

IX, was the first of men who brought Haoma for the incarnate world, an act of merit which was suitably rewarded by his getting for son (one of several) Yima, "the brilliant"[60] of many flocks, the most glorious and sun-like of men, who from his authority made both herds and people free from dying, both plants and waters free from drought, he in whose regime men could eat imperishable food" (Yasna IX. 4). "In his reign," the Yasna proceeds, "there was neither cold, nor heat, nor age, death, nor envy demon-made" (Yasna IX, 5). The "imperishable food" could in this context have been no other than Haoma. Yasht XI adds several interesting details. Yima, according to it, "plucked from the devils riches, welfare, flocks and fatness;" but later when he "resorted to falsehoods," glory fled from him, so that he met his death at the hands of his brother Spityura

But Ferg. II of the Vendidad makes him out to have been the first of men to whom Ahura had made his revelations. The Vendidad then makes Yima, through timidity or worse, to decline the responsibility, so as, no doubt, to reserve for Zarathustra the distinction of being the First of *saoshyants* (prophets). The declined offer of *saoshyant*-ship to Yima is an obvious post-Zarathustran addition.

60 For what it may be worth, it may be noted that whether the name "Yima" etymologically signifies "brilliant" or not, the name "Vivasvat" in Sanskrit suggests that significance, which "Yama" in Sanskrit does not appear to do.

"who sawed him in twain." Yasna XXXII.8 (of Zarathustran authorship), however, specifies the act of falsehood as having consisted in giving cows' flesh to eat to satisfy his people.[61]

192. The Vedic Yama (RV.X.104), having been the first of mortals, naturally also became the first of the Pitṛs, and the first by the same token to have trodden the path to the next world, wherefore, it came to be specially his business to guide all mortals after death over the same track to the abode of the Pitṛs. The only hint or suggestion (an extremely tenuous one) of the Avestan Yima's connection with the underworld or the world of spirits is to be found in a Bundahis legend which makes him form "below the earth" his "*vara*" or enclosure which this and other later Avestan literature appear to people with spirits rather than with men of flesh and blood. The same literature (Bundahis XXXII.1) does furnish a less doubtful coincidence in providing Yima with a sister Yimaka with whom (unlike the Vedic Yama who repelled his sister Yami's overtures in that behalf) he contracted a proper *khetuk-das* marriage. One other odd, but still quite significant, coincidence is found in a passage in RV.X.14.10-11, in which a worshipper prays to be consigned to the care of Yama's

61 This small item is significant to show that Zarathustra was far from repudiating pre-Zoroastrian Magianism in even non-spiritual details.

two "four-eyed" brindled watch-dogs to be carried safely across to the home of the benevolent fathers dwelling in festivity with Yama. Making a "four-eyed" dog (a dog with spots over the eyes) look at a corpse (the *sag-did*) several times at intervals has been traditionally an essential part of the ceremonies which have to be performed to assure for the faithful Zoroastrian safe and easy passage to the better world.

193. From all this, it appears that from some remote common beginning (of long anterior to Zoroaster's time) of which all clue has been lost, Yima started in Magian hands in a course of evolution which took him very far away from where Yama is found remaining in the Vedic hymns. The two appear to have gone on evolving differently in their differing environments. The Fravashi and Pitr cults followed markedly independent lines of evolution since the Vedic Aryans and the Magians parted company. I refrain from pursuing the Fravashi conception any further here, as it will come up for special treatment in connection with the Farvardin Yasht in Appendix B.[62] The wide separation between Yama and Yima and between the Pitrs and the Fravashis which has resulted from age-long pursuit of divergent lines of progress has given the few links which still survive between them a somewhat casual appearance, but

[62] See Appendix B, paras. 296-300 *post*.

the links nevertheless are real, and reminiscent of common origins.

194. The passage in the Yashts which credits Yima with having plundered the "devils" of their "riches, welfare, flocks and fatness" strikes a note of verisimilitude which moreover goes to indicate that, when it came to raiding, the nomads had not the best of the argument always. He, Yima, the chief of the agriculturist community, appears to have enriched his people with cattle wealth wrested from the former. And Yima appears to have disposed of this *embarras de richesse* by making his people cut up the cattle and eat them. The adventure naturally finds no mention in the version of the Yama myth which gets incorporated in the religious traditions of the descendants of the despoiled party. The growing dislike, on the other hand, on the part of the agriculturists in Media to indiscriminate cattle-slaughter which they must have come to see was economically injurious ended in Yima later getting discredited on the score of it, amongst the Magians.

195. Nomads from the northern grass-lands do not appear, from whatever traces they are found to have left of their habits in any part of Eurasia, to have ever made any bones about cutting up cattle and eating the meat thereof. What, indeed, is a herd good for to a nomad, if it is not to replenish his larder from day to day? The Vedic Aryans clearly had at no stage developed any qualms about

sacrificing cattle to regale their gods and deriving nutrition for their own bodies out of their meat. The cattle are of course much more prolific as a rule than men, and hecatombs of cattle sacrificed in honour of the gods who have blessed the tribe with this superfluity of meat and the holding of orgiastic feasting to dispose of it are easily seen to have been a recurrent necessity in the maintenance of the itinerant nomad economy. (See para. 33 *supra*.)

196. I cannot conceive of a pure-bred nomad arriving at any notion of thrift and saving. He prayed to his gods for an abundance of cattle in order to be able to dispose of the excess supply left in his hands which would otherwise prove an embarrassment in religious dissipations in the shape of hecatombs and draughts of *soma* or other liquor, eaten and drunk in honour of those same gods. The Vedic Aryan priests' perpetual incitements of their secular patrons to waste their substances without stint in expensive *yajnas* cannot surely be accounted for simply by their supposed mean cravings for personal pickings in the shape of *dakṣiṇās*. They furnish evidence of a survival of this essentially nomad outlook. Before they became householders, the nomads really did not need to have any notion to speak of, either of wealth or of thrift. The Vedic seers' plaints against niggardliness on the part of the worshippers (Pūṣān and the Aśvins are quite appro-

priately the gods to whom these complaints are specially addressed) betoken a conflict between the original open-handed constitutional wastefulness of the nomad and the growing thriftiness of the nomad on the way to being weaned into the householder.

197. To the householder, cattle in course of time proved important accessories, not only for supplementing his larder in ways previously unknown, but also for the easier performance of his agricultural operations. He could not afford to keep cattle in excessive numbers which was the reason why cattle appreciated as wealth in their eyes to the point of becoming even their chief currency for purposes of exchange of wealth in all its forms. Cattle could not possibly have attained to this position amongst nomads in their grass-land environment.

198. The aversion against the slaughtering of cattle, which is found from the Avesta to have progressively grown amongst the Magians in Media, had undoubtedly this economic motive at the bottom of it, though as is customary amongst primitive people the motive got duly reinforced by accessory religious sanctions which tended ultimately to overshadow the primary economic motive. The religious motive amongst them did not go to the length of making cow's meat prohibited food as in post-Vedic Hindu India. They objected to the hecatomb, but the Yashts provide ample

evidence that their primitive heroes (others besides Yima) freely indulged in it.[63] The dislike for it quite plainly evolved gradually and grew in strength with the passage of time. (See para. 242 and note below para. 269 *infra.*)

199. I cannot part with Yima without reference to another Avestan myth which is recounted in the Second Fergard of the Vendidad. Yima's pampering regime not unnaturally led to a serious overcrowding in the world amongst men. Yima met the situation, under divine instigation, by opening up the earth with his poniard and golden arrow, accompanying the act by a prayer to Aramaiti, the Earth-goddess, to stretch out sufficiently to accommodate this prodigal overflow of population. Under divine instigation again, Yima is stated in the Vendidad to have crushed the earth by stamping upon it and, thereafter, kneading her like potter's clay, to have prepared her for his "*vara*" or enclosure which was to accommodate and afford shelter to select seeds of men, plants and animals against a succession of fatal winters which Ahura warned him was about to overtake the material world.

200. These Yima myths from the Vendidad bear considerable resemblances to several myths associated with Pṛthu of the Indian Purāṇas. Pṛthu in the Purāṇas threatens Pṛthivī, the Earth,

[63] See Appendix B, *post*, paras. 211, 284, 314.

with bow and arrow to make her yield up to him her hidden treasures. Pṛthivī however does not wait for the execution of this threat. Pṛthu is also credited with having made the Earth level in order to fit her for purposes of cultivation and residence.

201. Pṛthu and Yima, I cannot but suspect, were refracted legendary images of a common original which has been lost. The Purāṇas make Pṛthivī derive her name from Pṛthu. The reverse, I suspect, had been the case. Yama having already in Indian legend been appropriated for patriarchate in the world of the departed Pitṛs, some other name had to be found for this, the first truly and properly functioning King of Men (which Pṛthu is in the Indian legend, as much as Yima is in the Avestan). This Purāṇa myth is traceable back to the Atharva-Veda which, I have found elsewhere, reflects mainly the Vrātya Rājanya culture of the Gangetic Valley, modified to suit Brahman tastes and sentiments.[64] Yima and Pṛthu will come up for further consideration later in connection with these legends. (Para. 243, *post.*)

(c) *Pre-Zoroastrian Proto-Aryan Survivals.*

202. I pass on at once to the third category of materials which went into the composition of the

64 See " Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)" by the author, 1934, pp. 83-84, 107-116. Book Company, Calcutta.

Zoroastrianism of the Avesta, without pausing to cite other instances of elements self-evolved by the Magian society in their new environment unaided by materials brought down from the earlier grassland *habitat* of the tribe. As I propose to subject the entire Yasht material to a systematic examination, with a view to tracing the several elements composing it to their original sources, in Appendix B to this Book, representative instances only of each of the several categories of materials have been taken up for illustrative purposes in this chapter.

203. Aramaiti, whom Yima was seen in the last section to have cloven open and stretched out (not once but thrice in succession, according to the Vendidad) to accommodate the swelling number of his human subjects, was unquestionably the Magian Earth-goddess from pre-Zoroastrian times, who through her "holiness" had succeeded along with Amertat (the immortal genius of the Plant-world) and Haurvatat (the "Health-giving" genius of the Waters) to make good her position in Ahura's cabinet of Amesha Spentas in the company of Asha (Righteousness), Vohu Mana (Good Thought) and Kshatra Vairya (Dominion) from before Zarathustra's arrival on the scene, as appears from the places of honour they are seen to occupy in the Yasna Haptanghaiti.[65] The name occurs in several

[65] See Appendix A, *post*, paras. 258-69, for a sketch of pre-Zoroastrian Magianism as I believe it to have been.

passages of the Rigveda as "Aramati," in two of which it is directly applied to designate "*mahī*," the earth. In one of the other passages, RV. VII. 42.3, Sāyaṇa interprets it to mean "*bhūmi*" (earth), giving it however in the remaining passages other meanings to suit his understanding of those passages. In these last-mentioned passages it is applied as an epithet to qualify male and female personations indifferently. Böhtlingk and Roth have taken the word in all but one passage to convey the sense of "service, obedience, devotion" or "as a personification of religious or active piety." Böhtlingk and Roth's interpretation appears to have been materially influenced by their prior acquaintance with the Holy Aramaiti of the Avesta. But Sāyaṇa's interpretations cannot be supposed to have been so influenced.[66] It may therefore be taken as reasonably established that "Aramaiti" was a name of Aryan origin. The idea of "holiness" or "active piety" is so inseparably interwoven with the Magian conception of their Earth Spirit that there is not the slightest reason for supposing that that conception had anything whatever to do at any time with the Mediterranean Earth-Mother-goddess of sanctified sexual incontinence. Neither does Pṛthivī, the Earth-goddess of the Indian Purāṇas (who receives much the same treatment in

[66] See Muir's Sanskrit Texts, Vol. IV, p. 317.

Pṛthu's hands as Aramaiti does in Yima's), show any the slightest affinity with the Mediterranean Earth-Mother-goddess.

204. From all the circumstances specified above, I am led to conclude that Aramaiti was a Proto-Aryan personation who no doubt did not remain exactly as she was brought down from the grass-lands. But it must have been the fundamental Proto-Aryan nucleus round which were gathered, during the centuries which may be supposed to have intervened between the arrival of the Magians in Media and the crystallisation of her as one of the Amesha Spentas of Ahura, the amiable though rather featureless attributes with which the Avesta is seen to endow her.

205. For reasons previously indicated, I refrain from citing other like features belonging to this category, which originating in the grass-lands yet failed to retain their pristine pagan complexion owing to the pressure of the new economic and social environment. The imported Proto-Aryan concepts and personations assumed a distinctly sombre turn by reason of this pressure. The transformation of the Magians from nomads to agriculturists was presumably accomplished with a considerable measure of quickness and completeness. The agricultural occupation has unquestionably in itself a sobering influence upon the imagination. It could not moreover have been very long before these nomads turned

agriculturists had to submit to the domination of fresh arrivals from the grass-lands, who never ceased to be pagans, because they did not have to be the hewers of wood and drawers of water by occupation, as came to be the case with the Magians. These latter went on praising their pagan gods to the accompaniment of hecatombs sacrificed in honour of those same gods and ceremonial feasting and roistering in the same old nomad fashion, depending entirely for the wherewithals thereof upon materials for which the producing Magians were necessarily laid under contribution. The Kavis and their Karapans had no occasion to, and did not, turn agriculturists like the Magians. The only industry they might have brought with them and which presumably in the beginning was run by their Aryan retainers and clients was stock-raising, confined again practically to horses, for which Persia became famous in historic times.

206. I have already indicated how these Iranian Kavis came also to make their own contributions to post-Zoroastrian Magianism. The success of Zoroaster's plans for the social and economic regeneration of the Magian brotherhood depending upon the enlistment of powerful "Kavi" support for the cause, the reinforced Magian religion which provided the groundwork for his schemes of reform had to be made a proselytising religion on an extensive scale, to be preached for conversion purposes chiefly among the Kavis. And

as the Kavis were far from unsophisticated savages and had in their theosophic armoury not a few praiseworthy elements which Magian intolerance and exclusiveness only had prevented them from recognising, so that Daevayasnianism appeared to them in every part of it to have been a tissue of abominations, it was inevitable that the Kavis' acceptance of the Zoroastrian creed would neither be unquestioning, nor unsubjected to modifications to suit the tastes and preferences of the best amongst their community. I have already adduced instances of important concessions made by the Magian priesthood, in matters of social custom, in deference to the wishes of their royal Kavi patrons (see para. 167, *supra*). I shall now proceed to show that for the same reasons and from similar motives they were led to admit considerable quantities of Iranian religious thought and institutions into the Magian theosophy, so that Zoroastrian Magianism came in this way to include elements clearly distinguishable as Iranian, as well by their frank paganism as by their superior poetic quality, from the rest of the Avesta. It is greatly to the credit of Zoroaster and his *zaotar* successors in the ministry that the admission of the Iranian material even under these conditions was not indiscriminately done, and Zoroastrian Magianism not only did not suffer but actually improved in moral and poetic quality through it.

(*d*) *Post-Zoroastrian Iranian Intrusions.*

207. There is a notion, very widespread even amongst scholars, that Zoroaster's religion was monotheism of the starkly scholastic brand affected by many of its modern exponents. I admit that the pre-Zoroastrian Magianism which Zoroaster in my view had accepted in its entirety, as the basis of his proselytising adventure amongst the Iranians, had elements in it which might and did in fact in course of time evolve into that type of monotheism, when the inheritance he left finally fell to be worked out by logically minded schematists. But even those who have discovered in Zoroaster the founder of this over-simplified anthropomorphistic monotheism have not failed to note what they regretfully point to as pagan adulterations in his creed. The Amesha Spentas of pre-Zoroastrian and post-Zoroastrian Magianism are just as much impersonations of features of the phenomenal world as are the Vedic and the Iranian divinities. But whereas these latter are impersonations mainly of phenomenal occurrences in the physical and biological universe found disposed as a rule outside the human mind, the former are impersonations mainly of similar occurrences in the mental world or occurrences touching and concerning the physical world in the first instance but transfigured in varying measures by being made to pass through the alchemy of the introspective mind. The

students of the Indian Upaniṣads at any rate will not allow themselves to be taken by surprise by the Amesha Spentas which are anthropomorphic conceptions no less than the nature-deities of the Vedic Aryans and Iranians, only more abstract because concerned more with phenomena observed by or with the help of the introspective faculty of men than with those observed by the senses. Magianism as it stood before it was touched up for proselytising purposes by Zoroaster and his *zaotar* and *mobed* successors had many "pagan" features but these belonged to a less sensuous and poetic type of paganism than what is seen to mark the nature-worship of the Vedic Aryans and the Iranians. Some of the very best of this poetic paganism was enabled to make its way into the Magian theosophy as it is found embodied in the Avesta, through Zoroaster, or in pursuance of the inclusive proselytising movement which he himself had initiated. A few illustrative instances of this sensuously poetical intrusion will now be taken up for consideration.

208. As resemblances go, Mithra of the Yashts may in substance be considered to have been a close point to point replica of the Mitra of the Vedic hymns. This in itself establishes the originally Aryan character of this god, who remains a god notwithstanding the title *yazata* (angel) he receives in his new domicil to point to his subordination to Ahura whose super-eminence was a

fundamental fact of the Magianism of pre-Zoroastrian days which no Iranian intrusion was allowed to detract from or affect. But the question is, when was he adopted into the Magian pantheon, as he undoubtedly was sometime or other from outside, and why ?

209. No Gatha attributable to Zoroaster's authorship mentions him, nor does the Gatha Haptanghaiti. He is expressly named, it is true along with Ahura and Anāhita in an inscription of Artaxerxes II which of course is post-Zoroastrian, and once again in one of Artaxerxes III which omits Anāhita. The " other bagas " (gods) through whose favour, conjoined with Ahura's, Darius Hystaspes in his inscriptions claims to have conquered his numerous enemies might very well have had both him and Anāhita in contemplation, and for reasons which I need not repeat I do not feel justified in concluding (with Dr. Moulton) from the omission of his name in the Zarathustran Gathas that Zarathustra intended to send Mithra into Hades as the very chief and prince of the Daevas, in the manner in which Indra expressly and decidedly was.[67] Dr. Moulton himself recognises that the conception of Mithra as the presiding genius of plighted troth in human transactions and as the ever-wakeful and unceasingly watchful observer of human actions who is never

[67] See *ante*, paras. 61, 64.

deceived, the god who smites the liar, even though he might be one of the faithful and the party deceived should have belonged to quite another category, fits admirably into the Zoroastrian theosophical scheme. I may add for myself that in so far as Mithra's justice may appear to have been tempered by mercy, this god took with him into Magianism an element of benignity which did not very obviously belong to it. I have already specified reasons for holding that Zarathustra could by no means have been the fanatical doctrinaire he is commonly supposed to have been, and that it is absurd to seek to find all his articles of faith and belief from within the ambit of the odd five Gathas, clearly of his own composition, which have survived in the Avesta; and the more reasonable presumption seems to be that Mithra's admission into the Magian pantheon was sanctioned by Zoroaster himself, rather than the one Dr. Moulton has drawn, namely that he had deliberately intended to banish Mithra away out of the true religion of Ahura. Dr. Williams Jackson at any rate appears to have been persuaded that there was evidence of concession in favour of Mithra who stood canonised by Mazda's side through such concession.[68]

210. But whether Zoroaster himself was a party or not to this highly sensible exercise of

68 "Persia, Past and Present" by A. V. Williams Jackson, p. 66.

theosophical syncretism, I conclude that Mithra previously thereto had stayed on for long centuries in Iran as one of the principal deities worshipped by the still pagan Iranians, fellow Aryans whom the Vedic people had left behind them when they started on their eastward journey into the Panjab, and that he was taken in as the principal *yazata* of Ahura Mazda, in order to conciliate the Aryan nobles, when these latter were persuaded and induced to become the patrons and promoters of the reform movement for which Zoroaster had lived, and if tradition is to be believed, had also died. There are significant passages in the Yashts which point to Mithra's late and deliberate adoption into Magianism. In Yasht X. 54, he is shown as expressly complaining to Ahura that in spite of his greatness and goodness, " men yet do not worship him with a sacrifice invoking him in his own name as they worship the other gods," whilst Yasht X. 92 makes the whole cabinet of Ahura and Amesha Spentas join in " confessing the religion of Mithra." These afford unexpectedly clear indications of syncretism resulting from what may not inaptly be described as an (Iranian) Kavi-Zoroaster concordat.

211. Anāhita,[69] an equally important figure in the Yashts and even more picturesque than Mithra,

[69] Anāhita is an Aryan-sounding name. If it is an Aryan name, does it etymologically signify " the uncon-

is as much ignored in the Zarathustran Gathas as she is in the Yasna Haptanghaiti. By way of compensation, as it were, the Visparad makes a point of joining her in its orisons to the "Gatha Haptanghaiti"[70] wherever it chooses to mention her. Also Yasna LXV is in itself a resounding Yasht of praise in the true Vedic Aryan style addressed to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, the only portion of it which bears a distinctly Magian flavour being the imprecation stuff in verse 7, where the waters are wished away from the man of evil intent, speech and deed, the offender of a friend, the insulter of the priests, the man who harms the workmen, the hater of his kind, the thief, the bludgeon-bearing ruffian, the sorcerer, the burier of dead bodies, the jealous, the niggard, the heretic, the tyrant. In the later Avestan Yasht V (the Ābān Yasht), she is figured as a woman who "tightens her cincture, making shapely breasts, full of beauty," a "diadem binding her head," which is "hundred-starred and golden, doubly quartered, wheel-shaped, splendid, streamer-decked, full-spreading and shapely." (Moulton, "Early Religious Poetry of Persia," p. 129.)

tainable?" This meaning fits the description in Yasna XLV (para. 219, *post*) admirably.

[70] *Cf.* Appendix A, *post*, para. 269, where the Yasna is seen to praise even itself. The personification and praise of *mantras*, etc., is of course a commonplace of post-Vedic theosophy.

212. The Yasht makes her out further as having been successively worshipped by many generations of bygone heroes, oftener with the Aryan kind of sacrifices of "a hundred horses, a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep," than with "milk, *haoma, barsom,* and *mathra*" with which Ahura Mazda, the Creator himself, worships her "in Airyana Vaejah, on the goodly Daitya river," in return wherefor Ardvi Sūra Anāhita blesses him by causing Zarathustra to be born as the *saoshyant* son of Pourushaspa to spread the Ahurian lore. The glaring anachronism and artificiality of these proceedings makes only too manifest the non-Magian Aryan origin of the cinctured goddess and her deliberate adoption into Zoroastrian theosophy, and in the interest of the Zoroastrian cause as will be presently seen.

213. It does not call for much discernment to see in all this a river-goddess originally conceived and worshipped only by pagans by birth and breeding (like the Vedic Aryan worshippers of the Apas) in the process of acclimatization in the not too kindly Magian theosophical soil.

214. Anāhita receives priority of mention over Mithra even, in the company of Ahura, in the inscription of Artaxerxes II (Longimanus), but is omitted from the place she here secured in that of Artaxerxes III. Dr. Moulton (following Darmesteter, 23 S.B.E., p. 53) cites Berosus's[71]

[71] Berosus was a priest of Belus or Marduk in Babylon,

authority for the statement that Artaxerxes II had statues of the goddess set up in several places in the empire. The Persians having been aniconists, like the Magians and the Vedic Aryans, I should reserve my opinion upon the value of this statement until one of these statues of Artaxerxes's construction should turn up at some excavation and admit of being unmistakably identified as Anāhita's and not with the figure of some goddess of the subject nations whom this Achaemenian King "restored" (for perhaps the same reasons that had led Darius to restore their temples), Xerxes having, according to Herodotus (from motives of cupidity apparently), caused many such statues to be removed when he was king, a step which his father Darius was too much of a statesman to persuade himself to take, much as he had shown himself disposed to do so, according to the

who wrote a history in Greek of Babylonia, fragments of which only have survived in the writings of Josephus, Eusebius and the Christian Fathers. In citing Berosus second-hand from these later writings, Darmesteter enters his weighty caveat against taking statements concerning Anāhita (Anaites or Anaitidos, rather than Anāhita) from Greek sources in a literal sense "as the Greeks," according to him, "with the eclectic turn of their mind" (which affected the Hellenised Asiatics even more) "were inclined to confound under one name all the great female deities of Asia Minor, and her name became a common appellation for the Aphrodites as well as for the Artemides of the East." *Cf.* similar eclectic use of the name Zeus.

same authority. The Pahlavi texts could hardly have spoken of Artaxerxes II with the deference they habitually do, had he shown himself addicted to image-worship on his own account.

215. Dr. Moulton is positive that this goddess was of Semitic origin ; and other scholars too have sought to equate her with the Babylonian and Assyrian Mother-goddess Ishtar (of whom the Ephesian Artemis was a recognisable variant), induced thereto by nothing more substantial than the phonetic resemblance suggested by the Elamitic Nahunti and the Armenian Anaites (other recognisable variants of the same Mother-goddess). All these variants of the Mother-goddess are known to have been personations of the goddess of Fertility of tribes who lived round the Levant, and none of them was a River goddess. (Sir J. G. Frazer has gone into the matter very circumstantially in his *Golden Bough*.)[72] Dr. Moulton however appears to find convincing proof, so far as he is concerned, of the Ephesian Artemis and Anāhita

[72] The relevant chapters may be read from The Thinker's Library Reprint, entitled "Adonis." Ishtar was the principal Igigi or heavenly attendant of Asshur in Assyrian mythology, and as such was supposed to represent Venus. That makes the taking over of her in her Armenian *sobriquet* of Anaites in Artaxerxes's time the less likely, seeing that Venus is a planet, and, planets were already then creations of the Devil according to Magian theology. [See note (11) *supra*.]

having been the same deity, in the following facts :—First, in coins and statues, *the former* is seen having "the upper part of her body in front covered with rows of breasts," "thereby symbolising her function of the nourishing mother of all life;" and secondly, that the Yashts tell repeatedly of maidens being beholden to Anāhita for husbands and young wives for happy child-births : Yasna LXV goes indeed further in attributing to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita the power of "purifying the seed of all male beings, sanctifying the wombs of all women to the birth and making all women fortunate in labour and bringing to women a timely and regular flow of milk." This last quotation should remind the reader of the superior potency of the germ-raining honey-whip of the Vedic Aryan Aśvins, since the rain of honey from the whip did not only purify what had been generated but caused the germination itself. The Pitṛs too were credited by the Vedic hymns with this same capacity for depositing germs, one which the Magian Fravashis shared with the Pitṛs. The Vedic Aryan Sun-god Savitṛ was another germinating power. Two Vedic Aryan goddesses, Rākā and Sinivālī, are mentioned, besides, in the Vedic hymns as having been specially concerned with parturition, and Agni and Tvaṣṭṛ too appear to have had sneaking predispositions in the same direction. But each and all of these provisions in the Avesta and the Rigveda are equally free from

the characteristically self-conscious erotic significance of the Mediterranean Mother-goddess's activities connected with the reproductive function. The Mediterranean Mother-goddess conceptions everywhere ended by sanctifying extraordinary sexual connections (condemned in the people's normal lives) for the sake of promoting fertility in plants and animals, the hard and uncertain climatic conditions of that region having no doubt first suggested the necessity of practising ritualistic incontinence, to the point of promiscuity even upon specified occasions, by way of homeopathic magic. It appears to me to be as extravagant to correlate this peculiar pathological development of the Mediterranean climate with the perfectly healthy mythology of reproduction of the Aryans and the Magians, as it must be to seek to discover any kind of correspondence between the ugly and purely symbolical rows of breasts of the Ephesean Diana and the highly artistic cinctured pair of them, "shapely and full of beauty," of Ardvi Sūra Anāhita.[73]

[73] For Dr. Moulton's views, see his "Early Religious Poetry of Persia," pp. 128-129. To the reasons (to my mind entirely sufficient) above given for disagreeing with Dr. Moulton's identification of Anāhita with the Armenian Anaites and Elamitic Nahunti, I may add that if one were to go by phonetic resemblances alone, there were other goddesses, near neighbours too, who might claim the honour Dr. Moulton has conferred on Anaites and Nahunti.

216. But this cinctured beauty was generically not a Magian figure. Despite Magian editing (rather crudely done) Ardvī Sūra Anāhita was a decidedly pagan conception. She, I am convinced, was neither Semitic nor Magian by origin. The discriminating reader will find her kins and prototypes in the Vedic hymns addressed to Sarasvatī and the Apas. (See in particular RV. VI. 61.)

217. And the Ābān Yasht (Yasht V) contains as clear indications of her deliberate adoption (see specially verses 8 and 9), and from the same motives, into the Mazdaean pantheon as the passages previously cited from the Mihir Yasht (Yasht X) seemed to show the adoption of Mithra to have been. The pre-Zoroastrian Magian water-spirit distinctly improved in poetic quality by being thus made a tributary of Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, the "uncontainable."

218. Ardvi Sūra Anāhita presents no obvious phonetic resemblance to any of the river-goddesses celebrated in the Vedic hymns. They appear to have been severally independent products of the reaction of similar natural phenomena upon similarly bred pagan types of mind.

219. But it is not easy to discover what river in Airyana Vaejah (taking this to have been

The Babylonians and Assyrians knew of two "great goddesses" bearing the names Anata and Anunit. I leave out the names of like-sounding Egyptian divinities who might also be in the running.

geographically restricted to the Iranian table-land) could have evoked the conception of this bountiful, victory-giving, purifying river-goddess. Yasht V does however point to the Rangha (the Tigris) as the river which might have been responsible for the conception; for "Paurva, the skilful sailor," says this Yasht, "when the conquering strong Thraetaona whirled him vulture-formed to heaven, cried out to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita for protection, promising a thousand libations, mixed with *haoma* and milk, piously prepared and strained," on the bank of this river, whereupon Ardvi Sūra, "the maiden fair and lusty, tall, high-cinctured, stately, noble, shod with buskins ankle-reaching, came to his rescue and re-established him in his sovereignty over the Earth of Ahura's creation."[74] How this sovereign offerer of sacrifices in the approved form came to incur or deserve this punishment at the hands of this greatest of primitive heroes, the confounder of the Azi-Dahaka Serpent of Babylonian association, must be left to each reader's personal conjecture.

220. There can be no doubt that the Tigris and the lands on her banks had known Aryan masters from before the middle of the Second Millennium B.C., which saw the advent of the Vedic Aryans into the Panjab. The Aryan-ruled

[74] See Moulton's "Early Religious Poetry of Persia," p. 131.

Mitanni country, whose kings appear from the Boghaz-Kui inscriptions to have worshipped Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra and the Nāsatyas, lay at this epoch between the Tigris and the Euphrates. For a brief space in the 14th century B.C. these kings are seen to have exercised some kind of authority even over Nineveh, whose Ishtar image Tushratta, the Mitanni king, is able to cause to be sent to Amenophis of Egypt (1379) B.C. to 1362 B.C) to cure the latter of some malady. The Assyrian Empire, at the height of its power, in the centuries that followed, had great ado in keeping the apparently Aryan Manda people in check and this Empire is known to have finally succumbed before a confederacy mostly of Aryan peoples led by the Aryan King of Media.[75] The Aryan Median

[75] An Epic hero, Husravah, is frequently mentioned in the Yashts as the one who had united the Aryan nations into one kingdom. (Yasht V.49; IX.115; XV.35). The Yashts appear to be echoing here a historical event which occurred in Media. Husravah was a Kayanian Kavi and so an Iranian. It is very unfortunate that the Median kings did not develop a taste for inscriptions which both the Persian and Armenian kings did under Assyrian schooling, which is the chief reason why so much less is known of them than of the Assyrians, Persians and Armenians, and why Husravah must remain unidentified.

As to the Mitanni rulers who are found to have been worshippers of Varuṇa, Mitra, Indra and the Nāsatyas, at p. 52 of his brochure on " Ancient Assyria " (Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature), Dr. C. H. W. Johns

Empire controlled northern Mesopotamia and Assyria from its capital city at Ecbatana, and Cyrus the Great, himself a Median Arizanti by origin, simply stepped into this Median inheritance when he overcame the Median ruler. Into this inheritance, Cyrus brought his ancestral principality of Ansan which itself had previously absorbed Susa and Parsua, and this empire he extended westward to the Mediterranean when later he broke the confederacy organised and led to oppose him by the Lydian Croesus. It is not improbable that resurging Assyrian pressure was able to drive a conquering Aryan people like the Mitanni rulers, if not these rulers themselves, from a principality or kingdom which they had succeeded in establishing for a time somewhere on the banks of the Tigris, away into Media. Here, cut off from the great river itself, hitherto idolised and worshipped at sight (as the river Sarasvatī was being idolised and worshipped in a similar manner at about the same time in the Panjab, and the Ganga of the post-Vedic Indians later came to be worshipped in the valley of the Ganges), the river-goddess got etherealised, so to speak, into the utterly mythical Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, the guardian goddess of all

notes that their kingdom "played a great part in Assyrian history as the kingdom of Khani or Khanigalbat. It seems to have been established *at least* as early as Hammurabi's time" (about 2000 B.C.).

the fertilising, strength-giving and cleansing waters of the universe. A like transformation will be seen to have taken place in the case of Haoma (Soma).

221. In Yasna XLV Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, so etherealised, is described as arriving "with a volume, sounding from afar, equal in bulk to all the waters that flow forth upon the Earth, descending from high Hukairya to the sea Vorukasha.[76] All the gulfs of Vorukasha get stirred by this fall and the sea itself wells up in the middle when the river plunges foaming into it, she of a thousand tributaries and a thousand outlets, whereof each is forty days' ride in length to a rider well mounted. And the chief outlet to this one water goes apart dividing, to all the seven Karshvars.[77] "And this outlet to my river," the poet of the Yasht proceeds, "this Ardvi Sūra Anāhita bears off its waters always in summer and winter[78] and purifies the seeds of

[76] Vorukasha is the aerial sea from which all the waters of the Earth flow down with the winds and clouds. The aerial ocean was a familiar Rigvedic conception.

[77] The Earth is one of these seven.

[78] The Indian reader is made to recall the "Sadānīrā" of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa by this description, as he is reminded too of the Seven *Dvīpas* of the Indian Paurāṇic literatures by the Magians' "Seven Karshvars," details to be borne in mind when the points of resemblance between the Magian and Paurāṇic points of view will come up for consideration in the following chapter.

men, and the women and women's milk." One must go to the Rigveda (RV.X. 17.10 and other verses collected by Muir in the Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 337-345) to find parallels to this Yasht.

222. To have conceived a goddess with these and other features as above outlined was for the dour Magian in the environment in which he was brought up as good as an impossibility.

223. And Anāhita is not the impersonation of the purifying waters only, she is described as having bestowed victory with both hands, in the first instance, it is to be noticed, to worshippers who make offerings to her of hecatombs in the right Iranian Kavi style. One easily forgives Artaxerxes Longimanus for preferring her to the tepid water "of the standing pools and vats," and "the full-flowing waters" of the streams whose chief merit lay in their fordability and fitness for bathing, "the motherly waters long of arms to reach sickness and misfortunes," of the XXXVIIIth Yasht of the Yasna Haptanghaiti, which had not evidently yet made the acquaintance of the powerful flood waters of Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, which had efficacy to bestow and restore sovereignty at pleasure to her favoured worshippers. Who could blame him either for placing her, in his inscription, above even Mithra by the side of Ahura ? The cinctured and buskined sovereign goddess must have triumphantly entered

into the Magian world, "diadem" and all, in the fore-front of her Kavi worshippers, and on her own terms, sweeping the Magian Verethraghna off his feet before her. That these worshippers could have been persuaded to foreswear allegiance to this generous victory-giving goddess of theirs on any terms, no reader of the Ābān Yasht can find it possible to imagine. It must be equally plain too to every reader of this Yasht that there was about this goddess nothing which could legitimately incline a prophet of Zoroaster's insight, who was a social reformer and statesman primarily and a prophet as a necessary condition or consequence thereof to oppose her entry into the world of Ahura of gods as well as of men.

224. Like Anāhita, Haoma also appears to have been a non-Magian Aryan institution which came into the Magian world with and at the same time as the Kavi patrons of Zoroaster's reforms ; or, at the very least, was revived for ceremonial worship from the faint echo of a nearly forgotten past. The manner in which room is made for him as a belated after-thought in the postscript to the Yasna Haptanghaiti is strongly suggestive of this. Dr. Moulton's special predilections no doubt make him read in Yasna XXXII. 14 a veiled protest by Zarathustra against Haoma's admission into (or continued retention within), the Mazdaean pantheon.[79] He translates this Gatha verse to read :

[79] Moulton, "Early Zoroastrianism," p. 358.

"To his (Zarathustra's) undoing Grehma and the Kavis have long devoted their purposes and energies, for they set themselves to help the Liar and that it may be said, 'the Ox shall be slain that may kindle the Avertor of Death (Duraosa, the standing epithet for Haoma) to help us.'" The next verse follows up the idea by pouring anathemas upon the entire Kavi and Karapan fraternity for their perverted activities.

225. The intention to "ban" the slaying of the kine is clear enough upon the language and phrasing of verse 14 of Yasna XXXII. But how it may be possible to read in it an intention at the same time to "ban Haoma" who is quite respectfully referred to, I find myself unable to make out, even praying Yasna XLVIII.10 in aid. In the latter, Zarathustra is seen to be querying Mazda: "When shall the men of mind's perfection come? And when shall they drive from hence the soil of this drunken joy whereby the Karapans with angry zeal would crush and by whose inspiration the tyrants (hold on) their evil rule?"[80] It is impossible to imagine that the writer of the Yasna had Haoma in his brains when he wrote this figuratively expressed condemnation of the part the Karapans were playing in keeping up the vicious social order which was bearing so hardly upon the producers.

[80] This is Dr. Mills' translation, 31 S.B.E., p. 158.

226. In order to clarify the position more completely than can possibly be done by ringing changes on these obscurely worded texts from the Gathas, I consider it necessary at this point to draw the reader's attention to an important item of fact which is commonly overlooked, namely, the extreme rarity if not inaccessibility of this mountain-born immortalising plant in the environments of both Media and Northern India. Haoma (Soma) appears to have been worshipped more as a beatific reminiscence than as a domesticated reality of daily life. Like Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, Haoma (Soma) had risen in estimation to the point of becoming almost completely mythical, in proportion as he became inaccessible in fact. That large bodies of men could have found opportunities to make sots of themselves upon Haoma (Soma) on any excuse whatever, religious or secular, is really unthinkable, even if we assume that this was possible in the grass-lands, about which too the evidence of geography is not very reassuring. And yet it is clear from both the Avesta and the Vedas that the Aryans of both localities were free drinkers of intoxicating liquors, which must have been alcoholic beverages mostly, of which agricultural people have never lacked an abundance of supply.[81] They drank of these beverages but, pagan-like, they seem to have professed

[81] The mode of preparation of Soma or Haoma is suggestive of its not having been fermented liquor of any kind.

to do so in honour of this mythical drink which had made the gods themselves immortal. The mythical character of the mountain-born Soma (or Haoma) is borne out by the fact that the abundant praises bestowed on him in both the Avestan and the Vedic hymns all fall short of furnishing just those particulars which would lead to a botanical identification of the plant, which remains unachieved to this date [see note (12) *supra* for other considerations relevant to this context]. If, now, we remember that the Magians, without being teetotallers, yet abhorred drunkenness (as they abhorred every other kind of physical excess), we can easily understand their exaggerated glorification of this mythical beverage, which they took care at the same time to join with as strongly an expressed condemnation of every form of accessible drink. In the Ashi Yasht (Yasht XVII.5), devoted to the glorification of Haoma amongst other divinities, it is expressly stated that whilst the drinking of Haoma is attended with Asha (rightness), or Ashi Vanguhi (piety), indulgence in all other forms of intoxicating liquor is attended with Aeshma (Anghra Mainyu's handmaiden, the impersonation of Disorder, Wrath and Violence).

227. If Zarathustra can really be supposed, by the verses of Yasnas XXXII and XLVIII above cited, to have been contemplating the banishment of Haoma into Hell, his protests in that behalf

proved utterly unavailing in fact, for Yasna IX (the Haoma Yasht) is seen to be successively celebrating a number of great men for the identical act of high meritoriousness, namely, of preparing Haoma for the incarnate world, and each in turn is duly rewarded for this service, Pourushaspa in particular having gained Zarathustra for son through it. And Zarathustra himself, who is made out in this Yasht as the gift to Pourushaspa of Haoma (as similarly, in the Ābān Yasht, he is made out to have been the gift to Ahura of Ardvi Sūra Anāhita), quite naturally breaks forth into a veritable paean of glorification of this divinity, wherein Haoma is described as the good and well-endowed, exact and righteous in nature, healing and nutritious, the best of drinks, beautiful of form, golden-hued with bending sprouts ; and he prays to him for strength and inspiration.[82] The rhapsody is continued through the next Yasna (X) in which in one of the verses he proceeds to praising "all the plants of Haoma of the gorges of the valleys, in clifts of sundered hillsides, cut for

[82] The beginning of the Haoma Yasht is as follows: Haoma appears to Zarathustra as he is engaged in serving the sacred fire, and on the latter enquiring who he was, introduces himself as "the holy one who driveth Death afar ;" and he calls upon Zarathustra to prepare him for the task and offer him praises " as the others praise." Yasna IX, verses 1 and 2.

the bundles bound by women.[83] From the silver cup I pour thee to the golden chalice over." Haoma is charged not only with the power to inspire but power also to lead to victory. His close affinity with the Vedic Aryan Soma (see paragraphs 48, 50, 57, *supra*) is thus not exhausted by the phonetic resemblance only of the names, in which respect the Yama-Yima parallel offers a marked contrast, which is a reason in itself for taking Haoma to have been a late post-Zoroastrian Iranian intrusion or revival which did not have time enough to be thoroughly acclimatised in the soil of Magian theosophy when it became the subject of the Yasht. Zarathuśtra, in Yasnas IX and X, has been unmistakeably made to take whole sheaves out of the fixed traditions handed down from before the middle of the Second Millennium B.C. through generations of poet-seers amongst the post-Magian Aryan settlers of Iran.

228. It remains only to note in regard to Haoma that from Yasna X it appears that Haoma was the god to be worshipped by unwed maidens looking for good husbands and married women yarning for brilliant offsprings and a righteous line. Luckily, he is nowhere figured as cinctured and of shapely breasts (any more than is Apām

[83] As though they were twigs of *barcsma*. The verisimilitude of this picture thrust in amongst the imaginative pictures which precede it is deceptive.

Napāt, the "tall and shining" Lightning-god who, like the Vedic Aryan Agni, is also reputed as "the Lord of the Females") which may be the reason he (like Apām Napāt again) has not had to run the very grave risk of identification with the guardian goddess of sanctified sexual immorality of the Mediterranean coastal regions.[84]

229. From all the above considerations, I am led to conclude that Haoma was a non-Magian Aryan divinity who walked into the syncretised Magian world of later days in the company of the converted Kavis, also upon his own terms. I have made it clear also that, in admitting Haoma, Magianism must not be supposed to have been deliberately making room for the intrusion into it of Bacchanalianism in any shape or form.

[84] There is as much duplication of functions amongst the Avestan personifications as there is amongst the Vedic Aryan divinities. I do not therefore feel justified in inferring from that fact alone an intention on the part of Zoroaster to expel the old gods and substitute for them (or as many of them as could be replaced) abstract spiritual impersonations charged with the capacity to perform the functions of the discarded nature-gods. The duplication of functions was no doubt in no small part due to syncretic adoption or adaptive incorporation of Iranian gods into the Magian system, but duplication of functions must also have existed amongst the purely Magian and purely Iranian personifications. See para. 114 *supra*.

§ 7. *The Magi in Media and in the Gangetic Valley.*

230. The Magians, I have shown, were a remotely early Proto-Aryan drift from the northern grass-lands who settled within a fairly restricted area in and about what later came to be known as Media. This country appears to have repeatedly changed masters who arrived now from the South and again from the North. The Hommel inscription points to an overshadowing culturally dominant Assyrian sovereignty of so far back as the beginning of the Second Millennium B.C. at least, and Sargon is seen to have been ruling over Media so late again as the 8th century B.C. The Mitanni Kings, the Medes and the Persians of whom we read in history, were later drifts from the same northern grass-lands which previously had thrown off the Magians into Media, an appreciably long time without doubt before the earlier Assyrian domination which is attested by the Hommel inscription. In the next chapter, I shall adduce reasons for supposing that the Magian settlement in Media, in the beginning a ruling people themselves in this new environment, had made considerable progress in culture upon lines sufficiently distinct to mark them off as a different people, socially and culturally though not in language, from their subsequently arriving masters by whom the governing element amongst the Magians (their "kinsmen lords"

in the language of the Avesta) were conquered and as a necessary consequence thereof dislodged. These new rulers, the Avesta shows again, must on the whole have been "Kavis" and "Karapans" of northern grass-land extraction. In that last chapter, I shall adduce considerations reasonably supporting the hypothesis that it was a considerable group of these dislodged Magian governing folk who very probably passed out, with a following sufficiently numerous [85] to conquer and make decisive cultural impressions upon an already settled and occupied country, into India of the Gangetic plains, some centuries before the arrival of the Vedic Aryans in the Panjab. These Magian conquerors of the Gangetic Anūpadeśa, my present investigations have persuaded me, would be just the people to evolve into the Eastern Vrātya Rājanyas of my monograph on "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)" to which several references have had to be made already in the course of my present thesis. The material from Indo-Aryan literature examined in that earlier book had led me to conclude that these Eastern Vrātya Rājanyas must have been immigrants into India who had arrived an appreciable time before the advent of the Vedic Aryans in the

[85] See para. 36 *ante* for suggestions as to the kind of following the dislodged gentry would be most likely to find.

Panjab, so as to have evolved, before that event happened, a characteristic culture on many points diametrically contrasted to that of the Vedic Aryans. This culture is found reflected in parts of the Atharva Veda and the Purāṇas. The Magian population left behind in Media, bereft of their natural (kinsmen) rulers, had on their part to experience hard times, millennial in duration, from the oppression and exploitation to which they were subjected by successive settlements amongst them of Iranian invaders who came later to be designated in the Avesta as "Kavis" and "Karapans" or as "Daevayasnians," to distinguish them from the Ahura-worshipping producing population who came to be known in history as the Magians of Media, but who like the Hindus, did not originally call themselves by that name.

231. My present investigations have led me to conclude further that the Vedic Aryans were a community of Aryans belonging to one of these later (but not very late) drifts, who had settled in Iran and lived there long enough and near enough to the Assyrians and the Magians to have derived from them some elements of their theosophy and culture which, I have shown, are found reflected in some of the Vedic hymns and verses. But the evidence makes it clear too that the Iranian ancestors of the Vedic Aryans could not at any time have amalgamated and become one

people with the Magians. I have indeed found nothing to lend countenance to the common assumption that the ancestors of the authors of the Vedic hymns and the Avesta had at one time been one people in Persia. It follows that the Vedic Aryans' ancestors did not, in my opinion, have any occasion at any time to part from any supposed kinsmen of theirs in Iran owing to differences that might have arisen amongst them in matters of worship or in others related or unrelated thereto. The Vedic Aryan people's departure for India can, in my hypothesis, be best accounted for by happenings of a like nature to those which, I have supposed, had previously dislodged the Magian intelligentsia and sent them to seek homes away in India. The Magians must have passed by the Panjab which, in comparison with the Eastern river valleys, must have been inhospitable and sparsely populated at this time, a condition of things which did not (for reasons which can only be conjectured) prevent the Vedic Aryans from settling down later on the same land, and making the most of the hard conditions which confronted them in the Land of the Five Rivers.

§ 8. *The Real Zoroaster.*

232. The Magians left behind in Media appear to have continued in their course of evolution along lines distinctively their own under their priests, who (we have every reason for inferring from the

internal evidence furnished by the Avesta and from the Greek testimony already considered) were a highly intellectual and introspective people, as all oppressed people, if they happen to be also intelligent, invariably tend to be (Jewish cultural history furnishing an instructive parallel, here also as at several other points previously noticed). The culture which they thereafter evolved in the somewhat exceptional political and social environment which the turn of events had created for them thus came to be quite as distinctive as that of the Jews, only more so. The hard material conditions into which they were thrown appear to have sharpened their intellectual and emotional faculties. These conditions must have been very hard indeed to have driven their Saoshyant, when he arrived, into the hysteric outpourings of anathemas and complaints which are seen to accompany Zoroaster's perfervid appeals to Ahura for help and strength.

233. But this leader and apostle whom the Magians did at long last find was one who not only felt keenly but who at the same time had or attained that superb sense of the realities of the situation which belongs to the successful social reformer and statesman as Zarathustra proved himself to be. Here indeed lay that which distinguished him from his fellow Magians. The threefold Magian weapon against evils and wrongs consisting of prayers, incantations and imprecations did

not suffice for Zarathustra. He could not rest until he was able to organise all the available forces that made for good, wherever these might be found, to overcome and control evils and wrongs in actual practice. The adulatory glorification that Zarathustra has received at the hands of his modern European admirers seeking to make him out as a prophet of religion only, of the same inspired type as they believe their Christ to have been, appears to me to be vitiated by a fundamentally mistaken perspective, as well of the environmental situation as of the personality of the prophet himself. So far from magnifying him, this lopsided glorification of the man as saint and prophet only has appeared to me to have lessened his greatness. He decidedly also was no doctrinaire preacher, no armchair theologian. He was a practical social reformer, and, more than that, a successful rebel, and a rebel too who succeeded without resort to armed force of any kind, which in itself signifies the possession on his part of a rare capacity for making compromises upon matters unessential whilst holding steadfastly to his ultimate aims and purposes. These aims and purposes again, he was statesman enough to have been able to carry through by the hands of the very people whom he began by denouncing as the agents and instruments incarnate of the Prince of Darkness. Zarathustra must unquestionably have been endowed with an uncommon capacity

for friendship, a magnetic personality and a driving power, spiritually speaking, rarely equalled in history. The Gathas attributable to him are, by no conceivable test, accountable as good literature and are scarcely even reasonably intelligible. Therefore, it must have been his spirit and personality, rather than his spoken words, which had moved friends and foes alike. How great was that spirit and personality it is scarcely possible to conceive or infer from the language of his Gathas alone ; ill-expressed and recondite as they are, they do but scant justice to that personality. To judge Zarathustra merely by his surviving compositions, as most of his modern admirers appear disposed to do, must, in my humble judgment, necessarily lead to inadequate appreciation, as well of the man as of the movement.

234. With the advent of Zarathustra and the eventually successful issue of the many-sided movement of reform which he initiated, opened (I repeat once again) an era of active and conscious syncretism which materially changed the outlook, appearance and the contents even of the pure-bred Magian culture and religion which he and his fellow Magians had inherited from their ancestors. What the nature of this syncretism appears to me to have been, I have, I hope, indicated with sufficient clearness and circumstantiality in this chapter. But the subject is certainly deserving of a closer examination, and those of my readers

who may feel interested in pursuing this investigation will find a more detailed analysis and examination of the Avestan material in the three Appendices to this book which are intended to supplement the text of this and the following chapter. In that the closing chapter of this book, I shall try to bring together the several points of resemblance which have appeared to me to suggest a genetic connection between the pre-Zoroastrian proto-Magian culture and what in my book on "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)" I have designated as the pre-Vedic-Aryan Vrātya-Rājanya culture of the Eastern Gangetic valley, without referring to the confirmatory presumptions which arise from Chanda and Hutton's revision of Hoernle's theory of a first and a second wave of Aryan immigration into India, of which due note has been taken in the Post-script appearing at pp. 246 and 247 of that book, or to recent anthropometrical speculations tending in the same direction.[86]

[86] In Deniker's "The Races of Man," the Parsis of Bombay are classed as sub-brachycephalic. The upper classes in Behar, Bengal and Assam are said to differ from the bulk of the population in these parts in being broad-headed rather than long-headed. Personally I am sceptical about the value of the cephalic index tests for determining race origins, as I have stated on several occasions. (See the following articles contributed by the author: "*The Elusive Aryan*," in the *Calcutta Review*, November, 1934. "*Some Reflections on Indian Castes*" in *Man in India*, Vol. XV, No. 1, January-March, 1935.)

CHAPTER V

THE MAGI IN INDIA—THE MAGIANS AND THE YEZIDIS

§ 1. *Magian Affinities of the Eastern Vrātya Rājanyas of the Gaṅgetic Valley.*

235. In my monograph, previously referred to, on "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture (Origins)," I was led by the materials which then fell under my investigation (namely, the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas, the Purāṇas and the Sūtra works) to the clear conclusion that the *Varnāśrama* culture of the Purāṇas and the Dharma Śāstras was not merely a later more developed and, for that reason only, a more complicated evolutionary stage of the Vedic Aryan culure and civilization which is found reflected in the hymns of the Rigveda. It was, I was convinced, a highly synthetic culture made up in part only of the Vedic Aryan, but by far the greater part, of a pre-existing non-Vedic culture which I felt justified in designating "the Eastern Vrātya culture." The Vedic Aryan *viś* settlements in the Land of the Five Rivers appeared to me from my materials to have been kins socially and culturally, but politically they were mutually independent and, as a rule, warring units, led by tribal chieftains and priests ; whereas the

Vrātya culture appeared to have been one evolved under the shadow of sovereign kings ruling by divine right over fairly extensive territories, one of which, that of Magadha, had even attained imperially overshadowing proportions. This Vrātya culture again bore traces of having been a synthetic culture itself, made up of elements some of which had failed to blend in the organic manner in which the various elements that went to make up Vedic Aryanism were seen to have done in Chapter III of this book. The unity, which was not homogeneous, was conferred largely by the power of the sovereign round whom was gathered a ruling caste of Vrātya Rājanyas of whom the king was the head and centre ; and this ruling caste formed the apex of a society which consisted of a conglomeration of different peoples separated from each other again and from the ruling community by barriers of castes, such as is found to exist in India even to-day. These peoples were by occupation agriculturist, artisans and traders, whereas the Vedic Aryan settlements appeared to consist of households which though practising agriculture and trading on rather primitive lines had as yet failed to wean themselves out of their inherited pastoral occupations and outlook. The ruling caste of Vrātya Rājanyas in the Gangetic Anūpadeśa appeared to have been, not materially only but intellectually also, superior even to the Vedic Aryan

Brahmans, the intellectual leaders of the Vedic Aryans *viś* settlements (the members of which however had come by some extraordinary historic freak and without much discrimination amongst themselves, to practise and enforce a system of compulsory universal education represented by the Vedic Aryan institution of *brahmacharya*). The rest of the Vrātya population was however evidently sunk in both ignorance and superstition to a degree unknown in the Vedic Ayan *viśas*. The intellectual pre-eminence of the Vrātya Rājanyas, besides being self-evident from their manner of governing their kingdoms, exhibited itself chiefly in their taste for theosophic and cosmogonic speculations, so much so that when these and the Vedic Aryan Brahmans came to meet in social and political intercourse, the latter went enthusiastically to school to the former to learn the rudiments of their philosophy which in the hands of these highly apt and intelligent pupils evolved later into the Upaniṣads and the Upaniṣad-Vedānta. The heterogeneous composition of the Eastern Vrātya culture and the different elements of which it was composed are found reflected in different portions of the Atharva Veda, in the Brāhmaṇa literature and in the Purāṇas.

2'6. When I had concluded the investigations which led to the writing of my monograph on Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture just mentioned, nothing struck me more forcibly than the contrast which the Vrātya Rājanyas with their high culture

presented to the rest of the population of the Eastern country with their lack of culture and the prevalence amongst them of varieties of superstitious practices more primitive and stubborn than any to be met with in the culture even of the Magians which, my present investigations have shown, was marked by the spell, incantation and imprecation motives to an extent unknown to the Rigvedic Aryans. Caste, in particular, appeared to me to have been indigenous in the Vrātya East and in a form which proved itself to be an inscrutable riddle to the Aryan Brahmans when they first came upon it, as is evidenced by the wild speculations they were led to advance upon the origin of this institution in their books. Caste, in the form in which they found it, appears to have been utterly unknown to the Vedic Aryan *viśas*.

237. This being the position at which I had arrived at the end of my investigations in connection with these Eastern Vrātyas, I could not avoid speculating as to who these Vrātya Rājanyas, so strangely incongruous in and at variance even with their surroundings, might possibly have been by origin. That they were foreign immigrants scarcely admitted of any doubt. But the materials on which I was working held out no clues of their former homeland, and this proved so disappointing to me that I found myself entirely sympathising with the reviewers of my book who complained

that I had not told them where these Eastern Vrātya Rājanyas had dropped from upon the Gangetic landscape.

238. My present investigations (which had originated in part from this unsatisfied desire to get to some discoverable trail of these Eastern Vrātya Rājanyas outside the Gangetic valley) have reasonably satisfied me that they very probably were the Magian intelligentsia who, I have supposed, got displaced and dislodged from their hearths and homes and from their ruling position in Media by conquering northland Aryan invaders who might have been the ancestors of the Vedic Aryans themselves.

239. Historical data of any kind definitely connecting the early Magians with the Vrātya Rājanyas must necessarily be wanting, the event having happened, if at all, not only before the age of written history, but before the art of writing itself had spread amongst the peoples concerned. But certain features not discernible in the Vedic Aryan culture, but which came to be distinctly characteristic of the synthetic Brāhmaṇa-Vrātya culture of the East and Middle East of Northern India, find prototypes and parallels significantly enough in the Magian culture as disclosed in the Avestan literature and in that culture alone.

240. The most striking similarity observeable is in the special turn that theosophical thought is seen to have taken in these two widely separated

cultures. Both these were more concerned with the things of the mind and the terrestrial environment to which that mind had to adjust itself for the practical operations of life than with the dramatic happenings in the firmament above which chiefly impressed the grass-land nomads and their yet unweaned and but partially agriculturised pastoral descendants in the Vedic Aryan *viś* settlements of the Panjab. Both theosophies laid stress on esotericism, and dilated upon the value and importance of spiritual guides.[87] This theosophic turn of mind led in both to a wide-spread practice amongst the orthodox of austere and pronouncedly Puritanic modes of living, for which reason the Greek writers readily likened the Magians with Indian gymnosophists (Yogis), some even affirming that the latter were the descendants of the former,[88] thus in a manner anticipating the thesis of the present chapter. Ritualistic uncleanliness, not necessarily associated with things un-hygienic whether physically or morally, is another less commendable common feature of both. The Magian taste for cosmogonic speculations and glorifications of spiritually puissant

[87] This is a commonplace of post-Vedic theosophy, and as regards the Avesta, see the *Ahuna Vairya* formula, amongst others.

[88] See the quotation from Diogenes Laertius, para. 147, *supra*.

kings, priests and prophets finds only more exaggerated expression in the Indian Purāṇas. The Magian millennia suggest the *yugas* of the Purāṇas without actually coinciding with them, which of course they could not do, seeing that the Magian millennia had to end in a final apocalyptic redemption whereas the Yuga cycles of the Purāṇas went on for ever and for ever. To what extent the super-imposition of this specially Zoroastrian modification of the Magianism of earlier days might have been responsible for this difference, is left a matter of doubt and conjecture.

241. Post-Vedic Indians and the Magians were alike again in their (relatively to their advanced culture) extravagant faith in spells and in the power of words and *mantras* (Avestan "*mathras*"). The Avestan Sirozahs are characteristic in addressing prayers even to the "holy cursing thought of Mazdah" which, from the Magian point of view, was entirely necessary and appropriate for "exorcising" and reducing into impotence Mazda's arch-opponent, the Devil himself. *Śabda* is *brahman* equally in Magian and post-Vedic theosophies.

242. The Vedic Aryans who, like the Iranians and Greeks, rejoiced in animal sacrifices had no qualms whatever about sacrificing oxen and eating the meat thereof. The injunctions against the killing of *milch-cows* found in several hymns of the Rigveda (see RV. VII. 90.15 and RV. VI. 28, in particular. *Cf.* Egyptian practice as reported by

Herodotus, II. 41) fall substantially short of the point at which the Magians arrived in Media, the killing and eating the meat of *cows and oxen* having there come to be equally reprobated. This general aversion to killing the species for sacrificial or other purposes is seen to have been carried a step further in the Gangetic plains of India, by the species as a whole being made inviolable in the same sacrosanctitic sense in which the Brahmans became inviolable in the same age. The purifying properties (in the ceremonial sense) acquired by cowdung in post-Vedic India are on the other hand paralleled, if not excelled, by those of *gomez* (*nirang* of the Parsis, bull's urine) amongst the Magians. These resemblances found between Magian and post-Vedic (not Vedic Aryan) practices and sentiments could scarcely have been altogether accidental. (See Note at the end of Appendix A, below para. 269, *infra*, and paras. 33 and 195-198, *supra*.)

243. Lastly the Pṛthu-Pṛthivī legend of the Atharva Veda and Purāṇas appears to present a non-Vedic-Aryan East-Gangetic version of the Yima legend which the Vrātya Rājyanas might very well have taken there with them from its home in Media. The Vedic Aryans' Yama was *their* variant of the Avestan Yima, not the Vrātya Rājanyas', for the hymns in which Yama figures are to be found in the literature, not of the Vrātya Rājanyas, but of the Vedic Aryans, the Rigveda

itself. The holy Aramaiti of the Vendidad legend, who passively submits to surgical treatment under Yima's golden arrow and poniard in the interest of the overgrowing population of Yima's kingdom, is, in personality or in the want thereof, even more like the Pṛthivī of the Pṛthu legend (she yields up her treasures to him under a mere threat of like treatment), than is Yima like Pṛthu. This Pṛthivī Earth-goddess of the Pṛthu legend is quite unequatable with the indigenous aboriginal Mother-goddess of the Gangetic valley, whom anthropologists find lurking behind the local *Śakti* cult and behind the more spiritualised Prakṛti concept of the Sāṅkhyas. I cannot, I feel, be very wrong in seeking the origin of the Pṛthu-Pṛthivī legend in the local conditions of the Magian society in Media rather than in those of the Gangetic Valley.[89]

[89] The Pṛthu legends have many facets each worthy of the closest study. Some only of these engaged my attention in my book on Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture, and others have been reviewed in this book. Both the Magians and the Vedic Aryans (the Vrātya Rājanyas also) were believers in the unqualified superiority of the male over the female principle, but the *Śakti* conception in fact implies its reverse. The subordination of the female to the male principle is more apparent than real in the Sānkhya Puruṣa-Prakṛti relationship. But the male is certainly the dominating principle in the Viṣṇu-Lakṣmī version, apparently of the same relationship. This last might have evolved

244. As the Magians' spoken language, at the time the Vrātya Rājanyas may be supposed to have arrived in the Gangetic plains, must have been an Aryan language not fundamentally unlike the Vedic Aryans', the synthesis of the cultures of these peoples which, I have supposed, took place in the Gangetic Anūpadeśa was for that reason easier of accomplishment than I imagined it was, at the time I wrote my previous book (see pp. 31n and 245-247 of that book). It is remarkable what a small proportion of the population of Northern India who speak Aryan varieties of languages is ethnologically Aryan. The incongruity is most marked in exactly the regions which appear to have been under Vrātya Rājanya domination both before and after the Aryan Brahmans came to have a

in part at least from the Pṛthu-Pṛthivī legend, as seems to be suggested *inter alia* from the fact of the Purāṇa versions of this legend invariably treating Pṛthu as an early incarnation of Viṣṇu. The indigenous Mother-goddess cult of the Gangetic valley stands in need of detailed examination with reference to whatever factual data may be available, which do not appear to be inconsiderable. There is another great subject of the same local origin awaiting treatment namely, the "*Bhāgavata*" cult. Whilst the indigenous Mother-goddess cult may in some ways have undergone modification through contact with the Pṛthu legend, the *Bhāgavat* cult may prove even to have originated from it. I have nothing beyond these speculations to offer at this stage on either of the two cults mentioned and their relations to the Pṛthu legend.

hand in moulding and giving specific directions to the culture of those regions. The Vrātya Rājanyas must have made great progress in Aryanising the language of their subject population and through it in giving a Magian-Aryan turn to their culture in other directions before the arrival of the Vedic Aryan Brahmans upon the scene. It is not at all surprising therefore to find the compounded Aryan-Vrātya culture of post-Vedic times in the East and Middle East of the Gangetic plains showing so little affinity to the Vedic culture of the hymns in every other respect, even if their spoken languages remained similar.

245. The most distinctive feature of the post-Vedic *Varnāśrama* culture and the very corner-stone of its entire structure of ideas and beliefs was the almost universally professed faith in the *karmavāda* doctrine of transmigration of souls. It had no place in the Vedic hymns, and the people whose culture is found reflected in them shared with almost every other community of known Aryan and Semitic affinities the very commonly held belief in the immortality of individuals after the termination of their earthly existences in a Hades which might or might not provide separate accommodations for the good and the wicked. Zoroaster's special adaptation of this belief embodied in his scheme of heaven, hell, sin, eternal damnation and redemption, we have had opportunities of examining. It is still a matter for debate whether Zoroaster took

it over from the Jews or the latter from him. Could we discover any trace of a belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls or of the cognate belief in re-incarnations in the Avesta, this would not only go towards substantially supporting my hypothesis of a Magian migration into the Ganges valley, it would point at the same time to Zoroaster's probable indebtedness to the Jews for the apocalyptic prophecies and associated doctrines which, superseding the transmigration doctrine, would thus come to dominate the modified Magian creed of the Avesta.[90]

[90] See Note D., at the end of this chapter, on the "Relation between the Jewish and Zoroastrian Apocalypses," at pp. 235-37.

It should be borne in mind in this connection that the deportation of the Jewish population of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) by Sargon to Media took place in 722 B. C. The Prophet Isaiah was a witness to this occurrence and his apocalyptic prophecies in Isaiah, Chs. 24-27, were stirred up by this event. Zoroaster, whose date is most reliably placed between 660 and 583 B. C. might, not at all improbably, have evolved his own more complex apocalyptic ideas through contact with the descendants of these exiled Jews. The Babylonian captivity of the Southern Jews which began in 586 B. C. and ended in 537 B. C. furnished the occasion for a return of the debt with interest. The strange turns of history which made these two oppressed communities, the Magians and the Jews, neighbours just at this time for two centuries could not fail to lead to assimilation of views and ideas of exactly the kind presented by the religious literatures of these two

246. The ten incarnations of Verethraghna described in the Bahram Yasht (to be more fully consi-

highly introspective peoples, in so far, that is to say, as they bore upon the doctrines (not found to have been originally conceived in any other) of Hell, the Devil and Apocalyptic Redemption.

660 B. C. and 583 B. C. are not only the most widely accepted traditional dates of Zoroaster's birth and death; the linguistic resemblances between the Gathas and the hymns of the Rig-Veda appear to be the single consideration that does not militate against pushing these dates further back in time. The social condition which the Gathas reflect is as close to that described as prevailing in Media by Herodotus in his times, as it is removed from that represented in the Vedic hymns. It is difficult also to resist the impression that the Jewish and Zoroastrian doctrines of Hell, the Devil and Regeneration must have arisen and grown up in close association and in conditions which were shared by both these peoples at about the same time. The linguistic argument has to be discounted in any event since it would demand the pushing of Zoroaster back into Vedic times, an altogether unthinkable supposition. The only and entirely reasonable explanation of the resemblances in language between the Vedas and the Gathas is that Zoroaster composed the latter in the dead but as yet unforgotten (and by the priestly class still closely studied) scriptural language of the Magians [see note (57) *supra*]. There will be few, I believe, to credit Zoroaster with having exercised extraordinary skill in the use of this language in the Gathas of his composition, an entirely intelligible and excusable lapse even in a prophet.

As bearing upon the question of Zoroaster's time of appearance in history, the later Persian tradition which

dered in Appendix B, *post*, paragraphs 301-306) do appear to me to contain this trace. It is however by itself not unequivocal enough to be decisive. But evidence from outside the Avesta is available to show that there very probably was a time when the ancestors of the Magians did entertain ideas favouring the possibility of the human soul too passing through incarnations in the manner recorded of Verethraghna in the Yasht.

2. *The Magians and the Yezidis.*

247. In the locality round about where the Magians had flourished, there are still to be seen a people who are socially and culturally pronouncedly depressed people, possessing no literature of their own, but following practices and a system of traditional beliefs which present many points of resemblance to the practices and the system of beliefs professed by the Magians and still followed by the Parsis and the Zoroastrians of Modern Persia. There are marked differences, too, observable

traces the descent, through the female line, of Artaxerxes Longimanus from Kavi Vishtaspa, affords material which is entirely corroborative of the generally accepted dates of Zoroaster's birth and death. It would be hypercritical to discount all these data, when, besides the linguistic resemblances which are easily accounted for, there is nothing whatever to set against them except loose unattested statements of Greek origin, even though found associated with names which usually carry authority.

between them, of which the most important for my present purposes is that the Yezidis ("Devil-worshippers" as they are called by their neighbours, but never by themselves), unlike the Zoroastrians, believe in transmigration of souls. These people are found scattered at the present day in the Caucasus regions, in Armenia and in Kurdistan.

248. In his "Persia, Past and Present," Professor Williams Jackson, basing upon personal observations supplemented by carefully collected testimony derived from external sources, has left a record of the customs and beliefs professed by this people, according to which, God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, first made from his own essence six other divinities, the Sun, the Moon, and the principal stars; and these joined with him in creating the angels. This apparently is nearer the Assara Mazas and the Igigis of the Hommel inscription, since discovered, than the fully formed pre-Zoroastrian Magian creed and may very safely be taken to represent an early stage of Magianism rather than as a late degenerated form of it. The Devil was in this way created originally as one of the angels, but having rebelled was cast down into Hell and then repenting was pardoned and restored to his former status, which is the reason the Yezidis never designate him as Satan or by any similar condemnatory epithet. They style him "Mālik Taus" (King Peacock),

under which euphemistic title he receives from the Yezidis periodical propitiative offerings which so far surpass in quantity and importance the worship they bestow on his Creator as not unnaturally to call down upon themselves the by-name of "Yezidis," that is, "Devil-worshippers," by which they are known amongst their neighbours. This peculiar treatment of the Devil marks a distinctly primitive stage of religious evolution, the studious appeasement of the destructive powers and purposeful selection of euphemistic designations for them being a well-attested characteristic of the mind's attitude towards those powers so long as it has not been able to rise to a sense of being the master of its own destinies; sufficient, that is to say, to give it confidence to regard evil openly as an enemy and to call its personification, the Devil, by that his own proper name. The only portion of the Yezidis' articles of faith bearing on the Devil which appears to be not quite primitive is the repentance legend, which undoubtedly represents a recent achievement of rationalising theology of that sophisticated order which is so familiar to students of advanced forms of religion.

249. The Yezidis, Professor Jackson has further recorded, revere Fire, Water and the Earth. They avoid spitting upon the ground, a Magian trait which had been duly taken note of as early as Herodotus's time. A Yezidi, should a charmed circle be drawn around him, will find himself

unable to step out of it so long as the charm is not properly withdrawn, a superstition in which one finds reflected the underlying idea of the *karshvara* which figures so prominently in the Avestan rites prescribed in the Vendidad.

250. And Professor Jackson has recorded finally that the Yezidis "believe in a future life of rewards and punishments, including condemnation to assume in another life the form of some animal." This clearly is the originating nuclear core of the doctrine of *Karmavāda* of post-Vedic Indian belief, which the Yezidis could not possibly have derived either from any of their foreign neighbours or from any conceivable subsequent cultural contact with post-Vedic Indians.

251. There is another important difference between the Yezidis and the Magians. The Yezidis do not practise the *dakhma*. Their attitude to the devils (the arch one as well as his lesser followers, who, it is one of their articles of faith, grub in the soil), easily accounts for this difference. The Yezidis, Dr. Jackson has left on record, will never pour boiling water on the earth for fear that it would scald those "little" devils. The Yezidis can have as little sentimental objection to consigning their dead to the care of these little friendly devils, as the Magians and the Vedic Aryans appear to have had to consigning theirs to the care of the "four-eyed" canine guardians of their departed relations.

252. The Yezidis' lives have throughout remained as locked up from outside intercourse of the kind which leads to interchange of ideas as did the lives of the Magians before Zoroaster's reforms. They live at the present day in the rural outskirts of cities and townships where they practise agriculture, chiefly by the hands of their women folk, the men going out to perform the lowest menial services to the cities' and the towns' peoples. It does seem probable that they have not remained altogether impervious to the Christian and Moslem ideas of their neighbours and employers, but substantially untouched in essentials their system of faith and belief has nevertheless remained through all these long centuries. This must in no small measure be due to the low estimation in which this permanently depressed community has been held, as material even for proselytising purposes, a phenomenon which is seen to have reproduced itself in many parts of India also.

253. I shall not, I hope, be suspected of being unduly deprecatory of Magian culture if I should find (in what I have noted above concerning the Yezidis) grounds for supposing that back in the depths of pre-historic times the Yezidis and the Magians had for many generations been one people, who later separated into, one, an advanced and, the other, a depressed group. They must have continued one people well into the time when they admitted the Assyrian Assara Mazas into their still

common system of faith and placed him at the very centre of it. Alberuni writing about 1000 B. C. has left it on record that the pure-bred Magian unaffected by Zoroastrianism had ceased to exist, those who had not accepted Zoroastrianism having passed over to other forms of faith. He himself specifies only the Shamsiyya sect by name.[91] Alberuni was

[91] By this sect he meant Sun-worshippers. Shamash was the name of the Sun-God of the Babylonians and Assyrians, who already in Hammurabi's time (about 2000 B. C.) had assumed, in addition to the beneficent, healing and life-giving attributes usually associated with this god, that of being inimical to all forms of wickedness and guile, all the attributes in fact of the Vedic Aryan Savitṛ and Mitra combined. The Mithra of Mithraism was evolved from this Shamash rather than from the Zoroastrian Mithra whose name it borrowed. There still must have been survivors of the ancient Sun-worshippers in Western Asia in Alberuni's time. The above statement of Alberuni should be considered in relation to the fact that the Greek writers are found speaking of "Magians" of other countries, such as Cappadocia, etc., who did not strike them as quite identical with the Magians of Media. The name "Magi" appears to have been very often loosely applied by them to designate the priestly occultists and diviners wherever found amongst the communities who occupied Eastern Anatolia and Persia.

It is no part of the scheme of the present book to engage in an analysis of Mithraism and resolve it into its elements, many of which are now known to have been taken over and absorbed into the official Christianity which displaced it. But it appears from all accounts to have been a highly

evidently not aware of the Magian affinities, in matters of faith, of the Yezidis, whom it has always been so easy to pass by unnoticed as "the Devil-worshippers."

254. It seems probable that the more advanced section of the community, the Magians, parted company with the less progressive section, the Yezidis, over the former's changing attitude towards his Satanic Majesty and his followers the "little devils." It might have been this change of attitude which had stood in the way of the Magians giving up the costly and troublesome business which the *dakhma* had come to be in their Median environment in favour of interment, the practice favoured by almost every other neighbouring community. One would hardly fancy handing over one's dead relations to "devils" regarded as such, even if they were of microbic dimensions.

esoteric and deliberately worked out combination of features taken over from many local varieties of theosophy and worship, mostly pre-Aryan in origin. It must have had more coherence (joined with considerable powers of appeal upon the intellectual and artistic faculties of bodies of people many of whom had fed upon the heritage of culture transmitted to them from Greece and Asia through Romano-Hellenic channels) than is apparent from the artificial pictures which (in the absence of accounts left by the professors of this Masonic cult) scholars are compelled to eke out of piecemeal archaeological remains of doubtful import and distorted presentations of its least important features by hostile and jealous Christian observers.

Magianism later no doubt discovered a more presentable reason against burial in the necessity for keeping " Holy Aramaiti " free from contamination from " corpses," when the mortal remains of men (and even dogs) had come to be viewed as neither more nor less than "corpses" and as prime sources of abomination as such (see the Vendidad, according to which uncleanliness arising from death surpasses almost every other species of uncleanliness including those arising from sins).

255. To return once more to the doctrine of transmigration of souls, it seems probable that the Magians and the Yezidis had come to entertain the same incompletely formed and indefinite kind of belief in it which the Yezidis hold to-day, and continued to do so when the two separated to form the two distinct communities of " Worshippers of Ahura " and " Worshippers of the Devil." The ten incarnations of Verethraghna of the Bahram Yasht (as the Wind-God in the first instance, and then successively as the Bull, the Horse, the Camel, the Boar, a Youth, a Raven a Ram, a Buck, and finally as an Adult Man), which would be quite at home in a late Indian Purāṇa would be and remain a fantastic incongruity in a Magian Yasht, unless it was considered to be reminiscent of such a stage in the slow evolution of Magian theosophy.

256. The cumulative effect of all the considerations set forth above, whatever value one may

feel disposed to attach to them singly, appears to me to establish the kinship, as I have supposed it, between the early Magians and the Vrātya Rājanyas of the Gangetic Valley.

257. With the Yezidis forming the last subject of my comparative studies, I here bring to a close my investigations into the life-history of the Proto-Aryan in his fourfold historico-geographical transformations into (1) the Magian, (2) the Iranian, (3) The Vedic Aryan, and (4) the prehistoric Vrātya Rājanya ruling caste of the Gangetic Valley.

Note D: Relation between the Jewish and Zoroastrian Apocalypses.

(*See p. 225 and note thereunder.*)

The benefits promised by the earlier Jewish Apocalyptic prophecies [some of them conceived under the shadow of the recurring invasions of Palestine and the Syrian countries which Adad-nirari IV, the Assyrian King, had been prosecuting about 800 B. C. " for the glory of Asshur, his master," and which culminated in the conquest of Samaria by Sargon in 722 B. C. and the deportation of its 27,290 inhabitants " to Halah and Habor, the river of Gozan, and the towns of Media " (2 Kings, 17·5-6)] were reserved for the exiled Hebrews, and they were neither more

nor less than the restoration to them of their country and government, conditioned upon their repenting from their "backslidings" and returning to the laws and the worship of Yahve from the worship of idols and images and of the national god of the invaders, to which they had been seduced by their evil dispositions and by false prophets. The promise of restoration was extended to the exiles from Judah after Nebuchadnezzar's deportation to Babylon of the citizens of Jerusalem which followed a hundred and thirty-six years after the like treatment of the inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom by Sargon. The promise in each case was, paradoxically enough, accompanied by prophecies of destruction which Yahve would mete out to the oppressors of Yahve's chosen people, agents and instruments though he had thought fit to make of them for punishing the " backslidings " of the Jews. (See Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, 760 B. C. to 600 B. C.) The post-restoration Deutero-Isaiah admitted even Gentiles, provided they had acknowledged Yahve, to the benefits promised to the virtuous Hebrews (Isaiah, 66). In Daniel, for the first time, one comes across the promise of the consummation of the "Kingdom to Come" for the benefit of the virtuous of *all* mankind (who for that purpose were to be resurrected from their graves) in language which echoes that of the Zoroastrian Gathas, coupled with the

corresponding foretelling of the doom of eternal damnation for the wicked (to be similarly resurrected). The rewards and punishments were to be meted out at one and the same time on the Day of Judgment, which again was to be ushered in by the previous arrival of the Messiah whose advent had already been foreshadowed in the earlier prophecies. This full-fledged Apocalypse was obviously taken over from the Zoroastrians in the Years of the Babylonian captivity which had lasted from 586 B.C. to 537 B.C. The hailing of the Liberator Cyrus himself as Messiah in some of these post-Exilic prophecies points unmistakably in that direction. But the earlier prophecies appear to point equally unmistakably to the seeds of the doctrine having germinated already amongst the Jews from before the fall of Samaria in 722 B. C. and long before the arrival of Zoroaster (who flourished from 660 B. C. to 583 B. C.) and to these having been communicated to the latter by the Samarian Israelites settled by Sargon in the country of Media.

Some concluding observations upon the conceptions of Heaven and Hell from the point of view of comparative mythology appear to be called for at this place.

The conception of a Tartarus (Indian *naraka*) to house and punish the wicked is surely not confined to the Zoroastrian and Jewish theologies, but in no other theosophy has it been

assigned the places it fills in those two systems. To the composers of the Rig-Vedic hymns, the *pitṛloka* was the abode of unending and unalloyed bliss ; and this state every Ārya was necessarily enabled to attain through the efficacy of libations of the immortalising juice of *soma* offered when living, followed by the elimination by Agni of the " mortal " parts of his remains after death. The dead in fact developed through these means a capacity and duration of blissful enjoyment beyond those within the reach of the living. To be gathered unto one's father was thus to be a sharer in this prospective bliss ; though as practical men the Vedic Aryans showed the greatest possible solicitude to put off this event as long as it lay within their power to do, by supplications to their deities or otherwise. Pre-Zoroastrian Magianism is also seen to have elaborated a scheme of obsequial ceremonies which duly fulfilled would automatically admit every deceased member of the brotherhood into the abode of bliss of Ahura The ultimate destination of persons who did not belong to their own communities does not appear to have troubled either the Āryas or the early Magians.

The Rig-Vedic texts in which the worshippers besought forgiveness from their Gods of their sins and transgressions (quite in consonance with the above ideas) had for their object relief from present distress such as sickness or poverty which were recognised as penalties due and to be rendered

therefor, but all in this life. The idea of punishment in prospect in a future existence for sins and transgressions committed in the present appears to have been unknown in Vedic times ; and even the fully developed *naraka* of the Purāṇas does not appear to have been conceived for awarding eternal damnation to the wicked. The prevailing idea of the Purāṇas was that sin had to be strictly accounted for, but this account admitted of being expiated for or worked off, in ways which need not be gone into here. Dr. Muir's Collection of Texts (Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 284-327), which is quite representative and fairly exhaustive, will be seen to bear out the above views.

The idea of sin which is inexpiable and unforgivable and which must therefore be visited by eternal damnation in the life to come appears thus to have been peculiar to Zoroastrian and Jewish theologies. The separation of the faithful from the unfaithful at Judgment (whether following instantaneously on death or postponed to a Last Day of Judgment), with a view to sending the former to Paradise for all time and consigning the latter to Hell for eternity, brought inevitably up the question of setting off sin against merit, and of determining the destiny of the individual whose sins exactly balanced his merits. The solution of the last question was found, in Zoroastrian theology, in the highly theological conception of Hamistakan (or purgatory) of the Pahlavi Texts

of which scholars have quite justifiably sought Zoroastrian authorisation in Ys. 33.1 and Ys. 48.4.

I cannot conclude without entering a strong plea here for bringing out reprints of the several volumes of Dr. Muir's Sanskrit Texts, or at any rate of selected portions of them. The original edition, where available, will before long cease to bear handling, and be made inaccessible ; and this will mean incalculable loss to Vedic and Sanskrit scholarship.

APPENDIX A.

Magianism.

§ 1. *Introductory.*

258. The Magian strand in the Avestan literature represents ideas and turns of thought which are as peculiar as the ideas and turns of thought which find expression in the post-Vedic Brāhmaṇa literature. They are neither of them literature which he who runs may read, as a stranger coming upon either for the first time is poignantly made to feel. Having been evolved amongst people who had made theosophical thinking their life's absorbing pre-occupation for successive generations, they became esoteric before their authors came to realize this for themselves, and later began to glory in the fact of this esotericism, as the composers of the Avesta and the Upaniṣads appear equally to have done.

259. This characteristic of Magian theosophy makes me apprehend that the sense and significance of much of what I have said on the Avestan literature in Chapter IV of this book will be missed by the general reader who can be hardly expected to start with a working acquaintance with this literature, which my treatment of this section has unavoidably had to take for granted as a rule.

§ 2. *Pre-Zoroastrian Magianism.*

260. About the easiest way for the general reader to pick up this preliminary knowledge of the Avesta would be to secure a copy of Dr. Moulton's brochure on "The Early Religious Poetry of Persia" in the Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature and read it. Those who cannot do so will have to be content with the short sketch given below of the Yasna Haptanghaiti (Yasnas 35-42) which, for reasons I have explained in the Text, appears to me to contain the core of Magianism as it stood before the Zoroastrian reforms. (See paragraphs 132, 150-154, *supra*.)

261. The central point of this Seven Chapter Yasna is of course Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, Creator and Ruler of the Universe, the focal point, so to speak, of all that is good, great and beneficent. Closest to him stand arrayed the personifications, six in number, of his highest and most beneficent principles, emanations each of them from Ahura, but not on that account to be supposed as merged in him, though still remaining subordinate to him in every respect and functioning solely and wholly to work out his good and high purposes.

262. These six emanations of Ahura's Spirit, collectively styled the Amesha Spentas, are respectively (1) Asha Vahista or simply Asha, standing for the spirit of Right or Righteousness, who

nevertheless in some manner not quite obvious to the uninitiate comes in a special manner to preside over the element of Fire. (2) Vohumana, the Spirit of Good Thought associated in a like esoteric manner with all that pertains to the care of Cattle. (3) Kshatra Vairja who stands for Sovereignty or Dominion, likewise esoterically associated with Metals. (4) Aramaiti, grammatically in the feminine gender, who appears to have been suggestive of the Earth first and is esoterically related to Piety; the remaining two, named respectively (5) Hourvatat and (6) Amertat, also words in the feminine gender, meaning respectively Health and Immortality, and being esoterically related to Water and the Plant-world respectively. These six divinities are more exalted than the much more numerous Yazatas, the angel-agents of Ahura, the Amesha Spentas constituting in a manner the Cabinet of Archangels of Ahura.

§ 3. *The Yasna Haptanghaiti.*

263. The Yasna Haptanghaiti is in the form of Yashts or praises (addressed to the above-named Ahuras as they are often collectively designated, the First Yasht being addressed by name to Ahura and the Six Amesha Spentas), praises which are mixed with prayers for the advancement towards the good in every form (spiritual and material good being inextricably interwoven in

Magianism) of the brotherhood, esoterically equated with the Kine and spoken of as "the Soul of Kine." The subordination of the Ameshas to Ahura and their close co-operative association with him is not lost sight of in a single instance in the Yasht.

264. The Second Yasht is addressed to Ahura and Fire, regarded again as a subordinate emanation of Ahura, but one step removed from the Ameshas. The prayers in it are in the main directed to Ahura, and when Fire happens to be addressed in *propria persona* he is so addressed in association with Ahura, the Yasht concluding as follows: "And to thy most beauteous body do we make our deep acknowledgment, O Ahura Mazda, to those Stars (which are thy body); and to that one, the highest of the high (the Sun?)."

265. The Third Yasht is an offer of worship to Ahura and his Holy Creation, and to the associated Ameshas, to it being joined the worship of the Fravashis of the Saints, of holy men and women.

266. The Fourth Yasht is addressed to the Earth and the Sacred Waters, which latter are called "Thy Wives, O Ahura Mazda" in the opening invocation, and addressed later as "Ye female Ahuras of Ahura." The Waters are later described as "the mothers of our life."

267. The Fifth Yasht is addressed to the Cattle "who are yet fit to live for us," and

worship is offered to the souls of the beasts who are tame and broken in, to those of the wild herds, and to the souls of the saints, wherever they were born, both of men and women," whose "good consciences," we are assured, "are conquering in the strife against the Daevas." This is followed up by worship offered to the Ameshas again, "both those who are male and those who are female" by name, the whole of this accumulated stream of worship being finally turned, so to speak, in a flood to Ahura Mazda's sovereign self.

268. The Sixth Yasht is a prayer to Ahura for the "Helpers" who are enumerated and who embrace (1) Righteous men, (2) Beasts trained for pasture, riding and for helpful companionship; and (3) lastly, for a "Kinsman Lord of us," with the labourers of the village and the *hakhema* (clients or peers, the secular intelligentsia, to distinguish them from the *zaotar* invokers of these prayers).

269. The Seventh and last Yasht is a prayer to Ahura as King, Life and Rewarder for help to attain Ahura's Good Kingdom for ever and for long life, and concludes with an offer of worship by Ahura's praisers and *mathra* speakers (*i.e.*, the *zaotars*), to him and to "that brave Yasna, the Yasna Haptanghaiti, the holy, the ritual chief."

[This abstract is based on Dr. Mills' Translation in Vol. 31 of the Sacred Books of the East,

Edn. 1887. The Reader's attention is drawn to the contents of the Fifth Yasht (p. 244). What exactly was the Magians' attitude towards Cattle? It was, I have frequently stressed (paras. 23, 195-198, 242 *supra*), not the same as that of the primitive Aryans. The Magians' "regard" for cattle appears to me to have been acquired in an environment in which cattle was much more of a rarity than it was in the environment familiar to the grass-land Aryans, and in which it had come to acquire special value as an accessory to agriculture. Such an environment is obviously favourable to the growth of "cattle-worship." The cultural remains which have been left by some of the aboriginal people of Asia Minor show traces of cattle-worship of one sort or another, and the references to the "Primeval Bull" in the literature of the Avesta appear to indicate that the Magians did not remain altogether unaffected by it. In the net effect, however, their attitude towards cattle appears to have fallen short of the "cattle-worship" of the aboriginal inhabitants amongst whom they had come and settled, or that which came to prevail in Paurāṇic India.

In connection with what has been stated above, the following note taken from Mungo Park's Diary of his Travels in the region of the Niger in Africa, dated 16th November, 1805, will be read with interest. "The inhabitants of Miniana eat their enemies if they die in the country. They

eat the flesh of horses. But such is their veneration for the cow that she is never killed ; when she dies they eat the flesh. Miniana is hilly. All the grains are cultivated, the same as in Bambara."]

APPENDIX B.

THE ZARATHUSTRAN TRAIL IN THE RELIGION OF THE AVESTA. ANALYSIS OF THE YASHTS.

§ 1. *The Zarathustran Trail.*

(*a*) *Zarathustran Proselytism.*

270. Zarathustra's reform movement, I have endeavoured to establish, originated in a grievously felt sense of long-standing social injustice and abuse. As appears from the Yasna Haptanghaiti, Magianism had (for substantial reasons no doubt) already conceived a rooted aversion for the Daevas and their worshippers. But it was Zoroaster who, I have shown, made it his special mission to array and organise the consciences of all good men and all the forces making for good, as well amongst his own people (the Magians) as amongst outsiders, against the opposing forces of evil which he had persuaded himself would, if left unchecked, bring about the destruction of society itself. His practical sense however (prompted in this matter very presumably by the Hvova family who though of the Magi were through Vizier Jamaspa already in close touch with Kavi Vishtaspa) had led him to look anxiously for the most effective kind of

support for his scheme of reform in the very stronghold of the Daevayasnians (whom the Magians and Zarathustra himself originally regarded as devils incarnate), the community of Iranian Kavis or nobles ; for these, he had been made to realise, were the only persons who could, if at all, deliver him the goods.

271. It was thus that Zarathustran Magianism came to be an intensely proselytising movement which there were the strongest reasons for supposing Magian exclusiveness and class intolerance would never have permitted or suffered if the movement had not in fact proved triumphantly successful well within Zarathustra's own lifetime.

272. This proselytising religion of Zarathustra, I have shown in the Text, was built in the main, upon existing Magian foundations. But the pre-Zoroastrian Mazdaism, for all its intensely felt and expressed aversion for Daevas and Kavis, was not a militant creed. The old rather effete creed needed to be magnetised into a living faith capable of conquest and expansion. The emotional undercurrent of Magianism had to be intensified and focussed into a striking force and the same employed for uprooting and utterly destroying the very sources of injustice and abuse. The statesman had need to be a prophet to do this.

273. The passive individualistic creed of salvation of Zoroaster's ancestors was given this

militant turn by Zarathustra's formulation of the doctrine of Evil, Hell and Regeneration. [See para. 152 *supra* and note (102), p. 294, *infra.*]

(b) *Zarathustra's Doctrine of Evil, Hell and Redemption.*

274. His doctrine of Evil, Hell, the Devil and Regeneration was Zarathustra's special contribution to the visible contents of Magian theology. But it is not to be imagined that the formulation of this doctrine would of itself have accomplished anything if behind it there had not been a personality overshadowing and transcending doctrines, a personality which owed its driving power not to religious fervour alone but equally if not more to largeness of understanding and breadth and inclusiveness of outlook. The Prophet-founder of the First Church Militant known to history had need to be a statesman of commanding political insight, breadth of vision and persuasiveness.

(c) *Zarathustra's Proselytising Technique.*

275. Zarathustra's originality, joined to his practical common sense, showed itself not only in his doctrine of Evil, Hell and Regeneration, but also in the extraordinarily facile technique he was able to evolve for giving utterance to his conceptions and carrying conviction at the same time in their

behalf into the minds of those whom he sought to convert into knights-militants in Ahura's cause. Ahura reveals to him his purposes and intentions in straight answers given in reply to questions put to him with equal directness.[92] However unsuitable for the purpose aimed at this method might appear to the sophisticated in his or in our times, it has generally proved highly effective at all times for didactic purposes and not by any means amongst a congregation of ignorant neophytes alone.

92 I do not mean to imply that Zoroaster himself did not believe in the reality of these inspired conversations. Prophets working themselves up to a state of exalted emotionalism which translates itself into ideas and beliefs of this kind is a common enough fact of observation in the religious history of the world. Zoroaster undoubtedly was passionately convinced of the reality of his inspiration and mission. But there is no trace in the Gathas of his composition that he at all anticipated the legendary matter that would gather round his name within the space of a few short centuries, any more than did Buddha. He had apparently not become this legendary figure to the time of the latest Achaemenian inscriptions ; and the Greek writings appear to show on the whole that the outside world had not been taking these legends, which by now had been assuming scriptural form amongst the members of the Zoroastrian faith, very seriously; and it is very much to the credit of the members of this faith that their idolization of their prophet never went to the point of seeking to make him out to be a figure of pre-historic antiquity.

276. Zarathustra's Ahura, in the express language of the Ormaz Yasht (Yasht I. 7), is "one to whom questions are asked." But this could have been inferred easily enough, even if the Yasht had not said so, from the Gathas, the Yasnas and the Yashts, from every part in fact of the Avesta traceable to Zarathustra's authorship or composed or reconstructed under inspiration derived from his teachings. The very place where Zoroaster is supposed to have had his revelations from Ahura is quite appropriately described in the Vendidad (Farg. XXII. 19) as the " Mountain of Holy Questions" and the "Forest of Holy Questions."

(d) *Zarathustra's Theology.*

277. I have in the Text laid special emphasis upon the fact that Zarathustra's religion was not a religion of Protest or Dissent. I wish to lay equal stress upon another fact not prominently brought out in the Text, namely, that Zarathustra was not called upon and had no occasion to propound a completely systematised religious creed. He supplemented and vivified what he had found ready to his hand. His intensely emergent practical aims precluded his attending to side-issues or to the externals of religion. I have shown in the Text [note (58), p. 165, and para. 209 *supra*] how puerile in all the circumstances it is to infer from his not expressly approving of this or that parti-

cular of the Magian creed (as it is found embodied in the Avesta) that he intended thereby to condemn it. There is just as little wisdom or justification for inferring from Zarathustra's silence over the externals of religion that he was an iconoclast in spirit, a rationalist and radical in his religious practices, and a disbeliever in *mathras* (religious formulas) and rituals. I can very well understand the disinclination and even repugnance which modern foreign admirers of Zarathustra feel to foisting the whole ritualistic clap-trap of the Avestan religion or any part of it upon Zarathustra himself. But it is a question how far this disinclination may have arisen from these condemned externals of worship having belonged to a creed which was not these admirers' own.

278. But, as I have also taken pains to show in the Text, Zarathustra brought into his ancestral religion a liberalism which did not originally belong to it. This liberalism of Zoroaster was not the reforming liberalism of a progressive radical. It was the liberalism of tolerant inclusiveness. The Iranian intrusions into the Avestan religion as it was inherited by Zoroaster, neither few nor unimportant, were entirely owing to this spirit of liberalism which Zarathustra had succeeded in infusing into the Magianism of his fathers.

(e) *The Counter-Reformation Fable—The Work of Zarathustra's Successors.*

279. The last point I wish to make here is that neither the ritualistic pall which appears to outsiders to overhang Zarathustra's special militant creed, nor the abundant intrusion of pagan material, both Iranian and non-Iranian, which appears to give the Avesta as a whole a colour and flavour so different from the truculent introspectiveness of the Zoroastrian Gathas, furnishes sufficient justification for scenting in them a "Counter-Reformation" engineered by reactionary Magian priests animated by a spirit inimical to Zarathustra's reforms. To erect from the ground up a complete scheme of theosophy and a complete code of theology and to preach and spread it before a spiritually starved world was no part of Zarathustra's life-work. It was directed, as I have pointed out, against very specific social abuses, and those again as they were found occurring within fairly circumscribed local limits. His object having been completely fulfilled in his own life-time, it fell to his successors to consolidate and complete his work and later to reduce the whole into writing which would carry canonical authority. It appears to me, moreover, that the syncretic movement which Zarathustra had initiated, specially in the direction of adopting and absorbing Iranian material, had not

at his death made as much progress as the situation later progressively demanded, and both these tasks fell to be carried out and completed by Zarathustra's successors in the Ministry ; and they appear to me to have carried out both these duties *bona fide* and in the spirit of the reformer as they had read and understood it, which I have no doubt they did much more accurately than Zarathustra's modern admirers have been able to do.

280. The analysis to follow of the materials of the Yashts which the interest of the work itself has led me to undertake will, I hope, substantially support these observations.

§ 2. *Analysis of the Yashts.*

(*a*) *The Ormazd, Haptan, Ardibehist and Khordad Yashts.*

281. The first two Yashts, the Ormazd and Haptan Yashts, dedicated to Ahura Mazda and the Amesha Spentas respectively, are substantially Magian in content but the presentation of them is according to the Zarathustran question-answer technique and also fully embodies his special development of the doctrine of evil. They are however made up in the main of strings of formulas and *mathras* in the true Magian style. The Ardibehist Yasht (Yasht III) is named after the

Amesha Spenta, Asha Vahista. It begins with an adjuration by Ahura to Zarathustra "to increase Asha Vahista (Spirit of Rightness or Righteousness) by hymns of praise and sacrifice," whereupon the latter asks to be informed of "the right words" of invocation "such as they are." This being done, the Yasht passes on to the praising of the "Airyaman Prayer." "Airyaman" of the Avesta and the Vedic Aryan "Aryaman" very probably were one and the same impersonation in some remote past. Whilst little beyond his having been an Āditya can be gathered about Aryaman's character from the Vedic hymns, "Airyaman" of the Avesta appears *par excellence* as a healing spirit. The Airyaman Prayer, according to the Yasht, is the "greatest, best, fairest, most fearful, firmest, the most victorious and best-healing of all spells." Verse 6 is characteristic. It declares, "one may heal with Holiness, one may heal with Law, one may heal with the Knife, one may heal with the Holy-word ; but healing with Holy-word is the best amongst the remedies." The Magians thus appear to have been amongst the greatest believers in the efficacy of spells as well for the curing of ills as to serve as imprecations for exorcising them, as will be seen later on (the distinction is fine but exists). The Vedic Aryan's addiction to spells and imprecations, as can be gathered from the hymns of the Rig-Veda, was mild and pallid in comparison, and one must go

to the Atharva-Veda to find the nearest Indian parallels.[93]

[93] We are apt to wonder at the exaggerated importance attached in these early religious speculations to the power of the "Word." The worship of phalluses which is another frequently-met feature of early religions leaves the superficial modern observer equally aghast on account of its fantasticity when he is not overwhelmed by its indecency. It is however use and wont which prevent the sophisticated of our day from being struck by the tremendous meaningfulness of the "Word" and of the reproductive function, which made the earliest of our species who came to reflect for the first time upon them (amongst other wonders of the same order) contemplate with amazement and awe the "power" they found lying behind them. The Upaniṣadic speculations on "*Sabda*" (word), "*Anna*" (food), "*Prāṇa*" (the vital force), etc., are reflections of this natural wonder caught at this its first formative stage. It would be unscientific to dismiss these and similar Magian and Jewish speculations as vapourings of diseased minds.

Brahmaṇaspati is perhaps the one amongst the Rig-Vedic impersonations which goes farthest in ascribing magic potency to prayers (*brahman*) unaccompanied by sacrifices. Beginning (as indicated in paras. 67, 84 and 86 *supra*) as a Thunder-god, in the proximity of his overshadowing rival Indra he appears to have kept his place in the Vedic pantheon by specialising as one of Indra's many collaborators in the work of wresting victory, originally from the clouds, and from all enemies of the Āryas afterwards, through the power of his voice (*raba*) only (RV., IV. 50. 4, 5 ; see also RV., I. 40.5 ; 190.1 ; II. 23 ; 24.8 ; and Muir, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V, pp. 272-83 *passim*).

282. The Fourth Yasht, named the Khordad Yasht (after the Amesha Spenta Haurvatat, the genius of Health associated with the Waters) is like in content and spirit. But one feels he is entering into a new world altogether in the Fifth Yasht, called the Ābān Yasht, addressed to the distinctly pagan embodiment with which we have already made detailed acquaintance, the River or Water spirit, Ardvi Sūra Anāhita (paras. 211- 23 *supra*).

(b) *The Ābān Yasht.*

283. Ahura Mazda confides to Zarathustra that when he had created this river from which flow all the waters that spread all over the Seven Karshvares (one of which only the earth is), Ardvi, for all her "white, thick strong arms," was sorely worried thinking, " who will worship me ? " But her anxiety he allayed by himself offering to her a sacrifice in the Airyana Vaejah by the good river Daitya.[94] This easy technique will be found repeatedly employed to achieve the absorption of a proper Iranian God into the Magian scheme of worship or as propaganda to make a Magian impersonation acceptable to the Iranians.

[94] This river was Araxes (according to Darmesteter), which Arethusa-like was supposed to have gone underground below the Caspian Sea to come right up on the other side as the Oxus. Oxus formerly flowing into the Caspian Sea has since been captured and intercepted by the Aral Sea.

284. But really Ardvi Sūra Anāhita had never wanted for worshippers. A whole string of worshippers are named in succession and many of them offer sacrifices in the shape of hecatombs in the Iranian style, though some do it in quite the orthodox Magian manner, which in themselves appear to make no difference to her, and all do this to obtain Victory in Battle. The worshippers include Haoshyangha the Paradhata, Yima, even Azi Dahāka (whose prayer however is not heard), Thraetaona, Kerasaspa, the Turanian Frangrasyan (whose prayer too is disregarded), the Kavis (Husravah who united the Aryan nations into one kingdom being one of them), Paurva the great sailor (whose restoration to the sovereignty of which Thraetaona had deprived him I have specially noticed in the Text), Jamaspa, Zarathustra and the Kavi Vishtaspa—all of which names will reappear in altered contexts in other Yashts.

285. If this conversion of the mild healing spirit of the Waters of the Magians into the live flesh-and-blood warriors' Goddess of Victory in Battles, bespeaks Iranian influence, Magian editing is evidenced on the other hand in the capacity with which she is endowed of enriching the *athravan* and his pupils with holy knowledge, provided the sacrifices are duly offered, upon which point she gives detailed instructions to Zarathustra in verses 86 to 95, in the course of which she develops a strange fastidiousness concerning the individual

fitness of the offerers of the prescribed sacrifices, amongst those who are expressly barred from offering them being "the faithful who do not sing the Gathas." It was characteristically Magian and *zaotar*-like to make this Iranian goddess carry on propaganda on behalf of Mazdaism amongst her native Iranian clients.

(c) *Khorshed and Māh Yashts.*

286. The Khorshed of Yasht VI is a quite undistinguished Sun-deity who appears to have been somewhat vaguely mentioned in the Yasna Haptanghaiti. He strikes me from all indications to have been a pre-Zoroastrian Magian Deity as Māh of Yasht VII more clearly was. This Moon-god is charged with the duties of the "Keeper of the Primeval Bull," a myth unknown to the Vedic Aryans and not likely to have had a counterpart in Iranian theosophy. The Vedic Aryans appear not to have known any Moon-god at all, as has been noticed already. The Magians had presumably received both deities, as also "the Primeval Bull," second-hand from people amongst whom they had come and settled in Media. (See p. 45n *supra.*)

(d) *The Tīr (Tishtrya) Yasht.*

287. If the Tishtrya Yasht had been a purely Magian evolution one would have expected the

Drought-demon Apaosha—whom this Prince amongst the four Regent Stars (identified by scholars with Sirius) conquers—to have figured as a Planet. (Planets, according to Magian notions were Ahrimanian evil creations *vis-a-vis* the beneficent Star creations of Mazda.) But Apaosha was not a Planet. The conqueror of the Drought-Demon in the Vedic myth was Indra. But Indra's character in the Aryan myth was so unstable and imtemperate that one hardly feels surprised at the Magians' express consignment of him to Hell as Anghra Mainyu's chief agent and procurator (Vendidad, Farg. X. 9 ; XXX. 43). Indra, I cannot help suspecting, was put out of commission as the conqueror of the Drought-Demon in post-Zoroastrian times on account of his character (as he appears also to have been in his other role of Verethraghna in favour of the mild Magian Wind-god Bād) and the more presentable Regent Star was substituted in his place. As the heliacal rising of Sirius occurs in June when the drought is at its worst in Persia, where the rains do not commence before November, this displacement of the Thunder-God by Sirius has raised exegetical difficulties which have much exercised modern interpreters of the Yasht. But the composer of the Yasht appears to have taken due care to make the Yasht immune from astronomical and climatological irregularities by providing that Tishtrya should be repelled by the Demon (as Indra never was) at the first onset, and should

need to be primed for a second successful encounter by sacrifices offered by the thirsting men and herds during this prolonged dry season which ends in November.[95]

288. Tishtrya, not being the legitimate drought destroyer, finds himself under the necessity of approaching Ahura and of complaining to him that he is not worshipped by name (that is to say, by the Iranians) like the other Yazatas (Yasht VIII 11, 23-24). Ahura responds by not only worshipping him himself ; he actually goes out of his way to canvass for his worship amongst the Iranians ; for Tishtrya, he assures them, had been specially created by him, Ahura, as worthy of worship, and that if the "Aryan countries" would but offer him proper sacrifices "never would a hostile horde enter into their countries, nor plague, nor leprosy, nor venomous plants, nor the chariot and uplifted spear of the foe." Tishtrya is thus made to steal Indra's thunder for both the purposes for which it served him in the Aryan myth, namely, to destroy the Drought-demon and to win victory for the Āryas.

[95] The heliacal rising of Sirius occurs on June 15, at the annual overflowing of the Nile, and this synchronism had been the basic feature of ancient Egyptian chronology. The Tishtrya legend might well be an adaptation of this feature dating from after Cambyses's conquest. (See A. Moret's "The Nile and Egyptian Civilization," Pp. 20, 29-31).

(*e*) *The Gōsh and Ashi Yashts.*

289. The presiding spirit of the IXth Yasht, variously designated as Drvāspa, Gōshurun or Gōsh, is a female angel, a personification of the Animal Kingdom which is her special care. To the Aryan nomad, cattle were truly no better than chattels, and an animal had to be superlatively strong to incite his admiration, and even so, the lion, the bull and the tiger provided him and his pastorally minded descendants with figures of speech, not gods to be worshipped. I have not come across zoolatry amongst any community of Aryan people, properly identified as such. Magianism escaped it however by the skin of its teeth almost, thanks to Ahura.[96] Gōsh was Magian not Iranian-bred.

[96] See Darmesteter's remarks upon it at p. lxxiii of 4 Sacred Books of the East, Edn. 1880. But for the freakish turn given to it by the over-emphasis Magianism was led to place on the opposition between Good and Evil—which culminated in the entire animal kingdom being diametrically divided between Ahura's and Ahrimanian creations, the latter of which, according to Magian dialectic, therefore called for utter extermination (the exceedingly harmless frog coming, most unfortunately, to be regarded with special disfavour)—Magianism might well have been landed in something like the *ahimsā* cult of the Jainas and Buddhists in India, which did not leave even the Hindu population altogether unaffected.

Being what she was, it is odd to find her receiving the same worship in quality and quantity almost as Ardvi Sūra Anāhita from the same Royal heroes, and others who are found to include Haoma besides. Ashi Vanguhi, the subject of the XVIIth Yasht, a feminine personation again (of Piety *cf.* the post-Vedic and obviously Paurāṇic impersonation of Sraddhā in RV., X. 151), Magian also by birth and breeding, is likewise seen to have qualified for the identical worship and from the same individuals. Both appear like attempts to dress up Magian female deities to look as important as the River-Goddess of Victory was in Iranian tradition. (See paras. 211-223 and paras. 283-285 *supra.*) The imitation is too close and too apparently purposeless not to suggest plagiarism. These two deities and these two Yashts possess significance of a more substantial character which I reserve for consideration when I return to these Yashts later, as I intend to do, in connection with the references they contain to Queen Hutaosa.

(*f*) *The Mihir* (*Mithra*) *Yasht.*

290. Mithra of the Xth Yasht is a great figure, more sublime if less poetical than Anāhita. He is truly royal but for all that no creator. "Lord of the Pastures" and "Chief in the Assemblies," he it is who enforces the divine ordinances, and upholds the truth in all human dealings. After

his incorporation into the Magian pantheon (in the manner already outlined in the Text, paras. 208-210), he is very appropriately appointed to sit in the panel of judges who have to determine the destinations of the departed souls, along with the native Magian impersonations of Truth and Obedience, Rashnu and Sraosha, the latter of whom figures throughout the Avesta as the Chief Executive Arm of Ahura. Mithra does not tolerate breaches of truth on the part even of the faithful against the unbeliever (Yasht X. 2). This is a trait one does not expect to find amongst the usual run of Magian deities who were constitutionally thorough-going and determined haters of the unbelievers. Mithra, like the Mitrā-Varuṇa of the Vedic hymns, was not only just but just without anger or malice. In the Vedic hymns Mitra is found overshadowed by Varuṇa. The Avestan Mithra has come clear out of Varuṇa's shadow because Varuṇa is not there ; but even so, he fails to be *svarāt* and *samrāt* here, because of the fealty he has to owe to the even greater Ahura, the Creator, the unquestioned and unquestionable Lord of the Created World which includes the gods. But the Avesta makes Ahura out to be more of a preaching God (like the God of Milton's Epic) than an active interfering Almighty Lord who like the Jewish Yahve is inclined to take his professed omnipotence seriously. So there obviously was room in the Avesta for a Yazata like Mithra.

The Aryan conception of Mithra was so high and elevated again in itself, that there could not be the slightest excuse for not according him as high and honourable a place as he came to occupy in the Zoroastrianised Magian pantheon. The Iranian case for his admission on these honourable terms was unanswerable from every point of view. The Iranians again would appear to have had no possible objection to allowing their even greater Varuṇa to be merged in the Ahura of the Magians when this appeared to amount to little more than the surrender of one proper name for another equally good, for the term Asura (later Ahura), I have adduced reasons for supposing, had already passed into the Aryan vocabulary in Iran as an exalted attribute specially applicable to their Varuṇa and aptly descriptive of him as the divine spirit *par excellence* of their pantheon. Artaxerxes II appears to me to have accurately reflected the common sentiment of both the enlightened Magian and the Iranian sections of the Zoroastrians of his time in associating Mithra and Anāhita in his inscription unequivocally with Ahura as the supreme gods of the nation taken as a whole, Ahura being made to occupy the premier position in the trinity.

291. As it is unnecessary to repeat what I have already stated concerning Mithra in the Text (paras. 208-210), I pass on at once to the subjects of the next two Yashts, making a special note as I

do so of the very significant verse 119 of Yasht X, where Ahura adjures: "Offer up a sacrifice unto Mithra, O Spitama, and order *thy pupils* to do the same. Let the worshippers of Mazda sacrifice unto thee (Mithra), with small cattle, with black cattle, with flying birds gliding forward on wings."

(*g*) *Srosh and Rashn Yashts.*

292. These two Yashts (XI and XII) concern two entirely Magian conceptions, Sraosha (Obedience) and Rashnu Razishta (Genius of Truth).

293. Sraosha, as I have already pointed out, figures all through the Avesta as the Chief Executive arm of Ahura.

294. The "Truth" of which Rashnu is the genius is doctrinal truth, adherence to the right creed and conduct in consonance therewith, a conception which however congenial to the Magian mind must have proved too fine for appreciation by the Persian people who understood by Truth veracity in speech and conduct. Thus Cyrus was characteristically Persian when he taunted the Spartan herald who had come to warn him off from interfering with the independence of the Greek Colonies in Asia Minor with the retort that he could not suffer himself to be brow-beaten by people who made it a practice to set apart a

place in each of their cities for people to cheat one another by false oaths, a compliment which the Greek *agoras* fully merited for more reasons than one. Darius I, on the other hand, appears from the Behistun inscriptions to have got himself thoroughly imbued in the Magian view of Truth and of its antithesis Druj which is not correctly translated as Lie, unless this word is twisted to cover and include sinful and unrighteous conduct of every description and, also Satan, all together. (See A. V. Williams Jackson's translation in "Persia Past and Present," pp. 180-183. Note that Darius, himself no heir to the throne but one who won his way to it by artifice and prowess combined, stigmatises every one who opposed him, and not the impostor Gaumata alone, as persons who had *lied*).

(*h*) *The Arshtat Yasht.*

295. But the Persian devotion to truth in both word and deed does not appear to have gone altogether unrepresented in the Yashts, for Arshtat, the genius of Truth in the sense of Veracity, is made to lend his name to Yasht XVIII which is devoted in fact and not altogether irrelevantly to the deification and worship of Hvareno, the personification of Aryan Glory, of which the Persians were the recognised custodians at the time of the composition of the Yasht. That the Persians

of this age stood in a pre-eminent degree identified with Truth (Veracity) by repute which was not confined within the limits of Persia is testified by Herodotus.

(i) *The Farvardin Yasht.*

296. I have already given my reasons in the Text (para. 187), for considering the Fravashi idea (the subject of glorification of the rather overdone Farvardin Yasht, Yasht XIII) as Magian entirely, owing nothing to Iranian sources. I suspect the Fravashi idea to have been originally co-terminous with the Vedic Aryan Pitṛ conception which I have found reasons for supposing was borrowed from the Magian Fravashi cult as it had been when this borrowing took place (*cf.* Darmesteter, 23, S. B. E., p. 179). If this be a correct surmise, the augmentation which it underwent in Media since the Vedic Aryans and the Magians parted company is truly amazing. The Fravashi idea did not remain confined to the deified souls of the departed ancestors, but came to embrace the souls (in the same manner deified) of living creatures, men, animals and plants, and even such symbiotic and syntropic corporate groups as a household, a borough, a township, a kingdom, the Aryan nation itself being provided with a guardian spirit all

its own.[97] The Gods, each had his or her Fravashi, and Ahura himself did not have to go without one (Yasht XIII. 80-81). Zarathustra's Fravashi in particular is made to expand into unbelievable dimensions, being figured as "the First Priest, the First Warrior and First Plougher of the ground," "The First Appropriator of all the good things of Mazda's creation," and "the very First to proclaim the Holy Word of Ahura which is finally to overcome and destroy Anghra Mainyu and his Daeva lieutenants." Zarathustra himself

[97] The Roman people's treatment of the disembodied spirits of the Dead and their conception of special geniuses associated with living individuals, places, peoples and even with the City of Rome bears the closest resemblance to be found to the Souls of the Dead of the Parsis and to the Fravashi-cult of the same people, derived, both of them, from the Magians. Nor do these appear to be the only points of resemblance between Magianism and Roman sacerdotalism, the hearth-fire to mention one other, having had equal value in the eyes of both peoples. As diviners too, no people stood nearer to the Magi than the Roman soothsayers. The Roman religion is known to have derived many of its basic features from the Etruscans, and the Etruscans have long been suspected of having been immigrant Asiatics. The possibility of a body of dispossessed Magian intellectuals having gone westward by ship and settled in Etruria in the manner and for the reasons which I have supposed took another body of the same people to the Gangetic plains may appear from the above indications to be deserving of a closer examination than I have been able to give to it.

was, of course, not the "First" in the sense of being the originator of any of these varied enterprises, but there is an element of verisimilitude in at least the last observation in so far as he, as I have shown, must have been the first to give the religion of Ahura the character of a proselytizing religion and to give it too the militant turn which it received from Zarathustra's doctrine of Evil, Hell and Regeneration.

297. The number of individuals whose Fravashis are worshipped by name is legion, but the specific instances which I select here for mention on account of their special interest are the Fravashis of the Prophet's wife whom he took from the house of the Hvovas (Hvovi) and of the two maids who have been destined, in the fulness of time, miraculously to bear the two Saoshyants to be, from the seeds of the Prophet which, failing to fructify in Hvovi, were gathered by the angel Neryosangh and consigned to the safe-keeping of the Yazata Anāhid (Anāhita) for the aforesaid glorious consummations. I doubt if even the post-Vedic Indian Purāṇas, which are extravagant enough, can furnish instances of high-flown sacerdotal rodomontade to equal the Farvardin Yasht.

298. The opening verses (1 to 25) of the Yasht, put into the mouth of Ahura, appears to me to be distinctly inspired by a quite inadequately veiled purpose of putting the pagan Ardvi Sūra

Anāhita several pegs down from where Yasht V, the Ābān Yasht, had perforce elevated her, so as to bring her below the level of the pure-bred Magian Fravashi impersonation. The Reader, I dare say, remembers this originally Iranian goddess's special guardianship under Iranian traditions of the reproductive processes; she purified the seeds of the males and the wombs of women, brought the latter to happy parturition and blessed them with the timely flow of the milk which was to nourish the children of these births. The anthropologist, again, may have told him that the ancestor-cult, wherever it has arisen, has almost invariably charged the spirits of the departed dead with the special guardianship of children in the womb. The Vedic Aryan Pitṛ and the Magian Fravashis unquestionably performed that function. The Fravashis according to several verses of the Farvardin Yasht (Yasht XIII. 11, 22, 28) protected foetuses from the assaults of Vidota and developed inside the wombs the bones, the hair, the entrails and the sexual organs thereof. But the competition between them and the Goddess of Waters was not allowed to remain restricted within a field which belonged originally to them both equally, according to the traditions of their respective worshippers. Not to be outdone by the River-Goddess, the Fravashis were endowed with the capacity also of giving victories in battle and rulership over countries to their warrior

invokers ; and they were made to surpass her even here (as they are seen to have been made to surpass her in their guardianship of the human foetus) by being made able to confer victory to contestants at debates in assemblies and meetings as well (Yasht XIII. 18, 24, 16). And as one of these verses show further, even the love-sick in body who have worshipped them in the proper manner were not to be sent away disappointed (Yasht XIII. 24). But the tale of glorification does not by any means end here. If I already had not evidence of the Magians' attachment to Haoma having been more or less of the Platonic order, I should have found it hard not to hold that "inspirer of ardent conceptions" himself (see para. 57 *ante*) responsible for the wild exaggerations that follow. The Waters, the Earth, the Cattle are stated to have been maintained by the Fravashis. It is they who have directed the Sun, the Moon and the Stars (not, mind, the Planets who like the frogs and other like abominations were Ahrimanian creations) in their courses. "Through the Fravashis' brightness and glory," Ahura is made to confide to Zarathustra, "I maintain Ardvi Sūra Anāhita......and make the Waters nourish plants, animals, men and finally the Aryan nation" (Yasht XIII. 10, 43). Was not this reason enough for the cinctured, diademed and buskined Goddess to look and feel small before the Fravashis? But the Yasht goes on relentlessly

to make Ahura confess further that "had not the 'awful' Fravashis given help to me, strength would belong to the Druj, dominion would belong to the Druj, the material world would belong to the Druj" (Yasht XIII. 12). This rake's progress in verbal exaggeration really ends by putting, not Ardvi Sūra Anāhita alone, but even Ahura Mazda himself out of commission, so to speak. These exaggerations find no place in the Yasna Haptanghaiti.[98] In all the above, I cannot

[98] The material passages in the Yasna Haptanghaiti are: "We worship the Fravashis of the saints, of holy men and holy women (Ys. XXXVII. 3)." "We worship the souls of those beasts which are tame and broken in, and of wild herds, and the souls of the saints wherever they are born, both of men and of women, whose good consciences are conquering in the strife against the Daevas or will conquer or have conquered (Ys. XXXIX. 3)." The clear implication of the latter passage in the context of the Yasna taken as a whole is that if the Daevas constitute the Militia of the Devil, there is to counter them in the ranks of Ahura's forces the Militia of the "Guardian Angels" of good men and women (dead, living and to be born) who manifest their existence and work their purpose through their consciences. (The Fravashis had already, before Zarathustra's time, come to represent these consciences hypostatised as immortal spirits after the manner of the Amesha Spentas in their most developed form.) The exaggeration in the passage quoted from the Yasht goes a long way beyond this, but is nevertheless so completely in accord with Zarathustra's militant reform doctrine (see paragraph 152, *supra*) that it appears

avoid finding an intention to emulate and out-vie the glorification stuff attaching to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita in the Iranian intrusions which Magianism had to submit to, owing to Zoroastrian syncretism.

299. Ahura's classification of the Fravashis and the fixing of the order of precedence amongst them have a distinctly Paurāṇic flavour. "The most powerful amongst the Fravashis of the faithful, O Spitama," Ahura declares, "are those of the men of the primitive law or those of the Saoshyants not yet born who are to restore the world. Of the others, the Fravashis of the living faithful are more powerful than those of the dead" (Yasht XIII. 17). Since the living faithful only are seen to deliver the goods, it is impossible not to recognize the practical good sense which places them above the Fravashis of those who are dead. But it was for all that somewhat hard upon

to do no more than emphasise the part Zarathustra himself had presumably assigned to the Fravashis in his programme for bringing on the final Redemption of the World. This is one of the considerations which strongly militate against the rash hypothesis that Zarathustra had meant to deny the Fravashis a place in his theosophical scheme, as it, at the same time, refutes the charge thrown off with equal heedlessness that the Magian *zaotars* of both before and after Zoroaster's time were worshippers of "nature-deities" in their concrete manifestations only, and that the introduction of the highly abstract conceptions one meets with in the Avesta was an innovation originating with Zarathustra and due wholly to him.

Ahura to have made him run breathlessly through sixty or more odd verses to recount the manifold blessings these several varieties of Fravashis are shown to have conferred upon the material world, when the one verse quoted at the end of paragraph 298 had already summed up their high services so adequately and completely. But even these are made to pale and shrivel up before the power and greatness (previously outlined) of the Fravashi of Zarathustra (Yasht XIII. 88-91). One concluding verse (Yasht XIII. 132) sums up the situation without figure, trope or periphrasis by offering worship to Zarathustra as "the Lord and the Master of the Material World." In the face of this, to charge the Magian successors of Zarathustra in his Ministry with having deliberately started and carried out a "Counter-reformation" after his death, aimed directly at upsetting his reforms, must strike every reader of the Fravashi Yasht as extraordinarily inept. The still more incredible and unnecessary hypothesis of the priestly order from amongst the down-trodden Elamitic substratum of the population guilefully possessing themselves of that Ministry for the political capital that might be and was made out of this subtly conceived and artfully executed religious conquest must likewise be rejected as neither more nor less than a scholastic improvisation. Does not this hypothesis after all credit the Magians with having really been greater wonder-workers and magicians than

any of their contemporary detractors were persuaded they were ? I find myself unable, finally, to charge Zarathustra with the intention of excluding the Fravashis altogether or at all from his reformed theosophy from the mere fact that he does not refer to them in the Gathas of his own composition. [For my reasons, see para. 209, 277 and notes (58) and (98) *supra.*]

(*j*) *The Bahram Yasht.*

301. It might look at first sight as if Ardvi Sūra Anāhita and the puissant Fravashis would be fully able between them to serve out to their worshippers every variety of victory they desired and up to the full measure of their desires. But Yasht XIV is nevertheless found to be devoted to the celebration of a Yazata who represents the Genius of Victory in *propria persona.* This is Verethraghna (later Bahram).

302. The name Verethraghna is Aryan and occurs in the Vedic hymns also, as has been noticed in the Text ; and I had supposed, before I had occasion to examine this Yasht, that Verethraghna would turn out like Haoma, Mithra and Anāhita to have been an Iranian contribution altogether. That examination however has led me to conclude that this Genius of Victory belonged to Magian legend and mythology and was not evolved under Iranian influence. No victor in

battle, no conqueror (Epic or Kavi) appears to have worshipped Verethraghna for victory as they had worshipped Ardvi Sūra Anāhita. The Magian tradition embodied in this Yasht makes this "best-armed of the heavenly gods" pass through several incarnations, Viṣṇu-like, namely, as Wind (Bād, the mild Magian breeze-giving deity, not the tumultuous Iranian counterpart of him, Vāyu), the Bull, the Horse, the Camel, the Boar, a Youth, a Raven, a Ram, a Buck and finally an Adult Male Man. Verethraghna, decidedly, is not the living God of Victory of a conquering and ruling people. He is a receding reminiscence of invaders once, who through long subjection had ceased to believe in Victory except as a legendary conception.

303. This Paurāṇic variety of Avatārs, I have shown in the Text, might be reminiscent also of times when the Magians were believers in some kind of transmigration of souls, a belief which they had very probably previously shared with the ancestors of Yezidis. The Yezidis and the Magians, I have supposed, had lived as one or a mixed people until some time at least after Assara Mazas, the God of gods of the Assyrians, had passed into these peoples' as yet common theosophy as *their* God of gods, and then had separated. Both these events very probably happened *after* the migration into India (of my hypothesis) of the displaced leaders of the still united people

and their settlement in the Gangetic Valley as the ruling people of that country. The reasons which might have led to the separation of the Magians and the Yezidis are matters for conjecture, and I have done my best to reconstruct these reasons from such materials as have been available. But a doctrine of transmigration of souls such as the Magians and Yezidis might when one people have believed in could not well continue to co-exist with the Zarathustran doctrine of Redemption. What devious dialectics had to be resorted to by the Upaniṣadists in post-Vedic India to make the doctrine consort with the Vedic doctrine of the Pitṛs, I have tried to exhibit at pp. 154 to 162 of my book on "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture." Belief in transmigration, supposing it had existed, had to pass completely out from the Zarathustranised Magianism of the Avesta to make room for his Redemption doctrine; and this might happen easily enough if the belief never went beyond the rudimentary stage in which it is still found lingering amongst the present-day Yezidis (see Chapter V *ante*, paragraphs 250, 255). But even so, it did not pass away without leaving what in that case must be considered to be the one surviving trace of it in the Verethraghna incarnations of the Avesta. (See Appendix E below.)

304. I have in Chapter III of the Text (see *ante* paras. 62 to 64) stated reasons for the

view there expressed that the very first Verethraghna incarnation, that is to say, the original archetypal Verethraghna was very probably Indra, and it was on account of his unstable character that Indra had had to make room in the Yasht for Bād. I need not repeat those reasons here, nor how again the term Verethraghna, by a trick of faulty etymology, came to give birth in the Punjab to the Vṛtra incarnation of the Drought Demon Apaosha.

305. The Verethraghna Yasht is characteristically Magian too in the room it finds for an enthusiastic exposition of the magical efficacy of the bones and feathers of the raven (one of the animal incarnations of this best-armed of the heavenly gods) for bringing to their holder the homage of men, the feather if rubbed being further credited with the added potency of repelling curses and even sending them back on the rebound to their originators. This magic-mongering is characteristically Ātharvaṇic and affords one more indication, besides those already recounted in Chapter V, of the kinship which existed between the Ātharvaṇic Vrātya Rājanyas of the Gangetic Valley and the *athravan* culture of the Yasnas and the Yashts, leaving aside arguments, otherwise inconclusive, which might be advanced upon the phonetic resemblance, not apparently altogether accidental, presented by the names "*atharvan*" and "*athravan*." [As to the virtual identity of

the worlds of the Purāṇas and the Atharva Veda, and its substantial incommensurability with the world of all but the latest stratum of the Rig-Veda (which is of Ātharvanic origin), see my previously cited work, "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture."]

306. The Verethraghna Yasht is further remarkable for the rather barefaced propaganda in which it indulges for persuading the Iranian reinforcements into the Magian brotherhood to accept for worship a god who had displaced their own and presumably also the Proto-Magians' Indra. "Let the Aryan nations," Ahura is made to say, "bring libations to Verethraghna, tying bundles of *baresma* for him and cooking for him a head of cattle (special care being recommended to see that the single cattle of which it was the head was all of one colour, Yasht XIV. 50)" whereby, he assures them, they might secure the Aryan countries from hostile invasions, plagues, venomous plants, etc., etc., the formula employed being identical in terms with the one we found utilised (*vide* para. 288 *ante*) for an exactly similar propaganda in favour of Tishtrya, the other substitute for the same Indra in his personation as the Slayer of the Drought-Demon in the Apaosha myth according to another surmise of mine which receives considerable support from Darmesteter (*vide* para. 65 *ante*).

(*k*) *The Rām Yasht.*

307. Yasht XV is addressed to Vāyu (= Rām).

308. He, Vāyu, aided and seconded by Apām Napāt, "divides the waters amongst the countries of the Material World." Putting aside the presumption arising from the point to point identity of these deities with their Vedic Aryan namesakes, the Iranian family origin of Vāyu is hardly left in doubt when Ahura is seen offering sacrifices to him in Airyana Vaejah "on a golden throne, under golden beams and beneath a golden canopy with bundles of *baresma* and offerings of full-boiling milk" (Yasht XV. 2-3), in just the same manner as he did to Mithra and Anāhita. A confirmatory indication is found in the fact that the heroes who offered worship to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita for victory in battle offer worship to him, including Kerasaspa, who comes forward as usual with his "hundred male horses, a thousand oxen and ten thousand lambs on the bank of the Gudha (a channel of the Rangha)" to do honour to this deity (Yasht XV. 27). "To him," we are further informed by this Yasht, "also offered sacrifices Aurva-Sara," a "lord of the country" of dubious antecedents, as did also at the same time his doughty opponent Husravah, "he who had united the Aryan nations into one kingdom," and both were suitably rewarded by the astute Vāyu bracing the latter to

conquer the former, and, in his turn, aiding the vanquished to flee from his conqueror " in safety " (Yasht XV. 31-32). But the decisive argument in favour of Vāyu's Iranian affinities is furnished by verses 35-36 which recount that " to him did offer sacrifices Hutaosa, she of many brothers of the Naotara house " to win for husband the Naotaride King Vishtaspa, Zarathustra's Kavi convert, friend and sovereign patron.

309. The Yashts show acquaintance with two Wind gods, with names which appear to be etymologically connected, Bād and Vāyu. Vāyu who is the more powerful goes through both the two Worlds of Good and Evil Spirits, whereas the activities of the milder Bād are confined within the former. I naturally suspect Bād to have been the Magian Wind-god whom the Magians had brought from the grass-lands and suitably civilized. Vāyu, the Iranian Storm-god, must, on the other hand, have stormed his way into the Magian pantheon in Queen Hutaosa's train. But for such powerful patronage, this tumultuous creation of Ahriman, the inseparable henchman of Indra in the Vedic hymns, could never have got into a society which had felt constrained to expel Indra.[99]

[99] The two supposed references to Vāyu in Verses 6 and 7 of Yasna LIII (the marriage-service prayer at the wedding of Zarathustra's daughter Pouruchista) are inconclusive, the texts being obviously corrupt.

This patronage appears indeed to have won for him a treatment which is accorded only to Ormazd in the Ormazd Yasht. The Rām Yasht gives a long enumeration of Vāyu's names coined *ad hoc* from his many attributes, fancied most of them, in a style which is quite familiar to students of the Indian Paurāṇic literature.

(*l*) *The Din Yasht.*

310. Din (Daena) of Yasht XVI, the (feminine) impersonation of Zarathustra's Law or Religion, appears to receive worship second-hand through Kista, the impersonation of Religious Knowledge. This Kista (Chista), Darmesteter aptly notes (23 Sacred Books of the East, p. 264), is rather "pallid," and does not rise above the intangibility of an abstraction. No epic heroes are made to offer her worship in the Yasht, and so far as this Yasht discloses, the prophet and his wife Hvovi were the two persons who had offered sacrifices to her. Darmesteter has from these indications been led to conclude that she must have been a goddess of Zoroaster's creation, an entirely legitimate conclusion, of which admirers of Zarathustra who appear inclined to find in him a monotheist after their own heart might take special note.

(*m*) *Queen Hutaosa's part in the propagation of Zarathustra's Reforms.*

311. Ashi Vanguhi of Yasht XVII and Gōsh, Gōshurun, of Yasht IX, the Magian female impersonations of Piety and Care of Cattle, have been considered already (*vide* para. 289 *ante*). But I reserved for consideration at this place an item of fact related about both in nearly the same language, namely, that Zarathustra specially worshipped each of these deities for the identical purpose of making King Vishtaspa's lady, Queen Hutaosa, "speak and act according to law and spread and make known the law of Mazda." Here perhaps lies the secret of the admission into the Magian pantheon of the Iranian Storm-God and his being placed over the head of the native Wind-god Bād. What Queen Hutaosa had owed to Vāyu the reader has gathered already from the Rām Yasht. She won for husband King Vishtaspa through Vāyu, and the Ashi and the Gōsh Yashts show how this event in the long run might have proved instrumental in winning King Vishtaspa for the Zarathustran faith and cause, for these two Yashts appear to contain hints (which I wish had been more plainly expressed) that the conversion of the King himself might not improbably have been owing to his Queen's efforts in spreading the true religion. The magnitude of Queen Hutaosa's services in this behalf may be measured from the further fact noted in the Ashi Yasht (Yasht XVII.

54-56) that Ashi Vanguhi had at one stage to flee wailing from "the Turanians and the swift-horsed Naotaras," the tribe to which both King Vishtaspa and Queen Hutaosa are stated in several places in the Yashts to have belonged. To have lent aid to convert these victorious enemies of Zarathustra's God and cause (who must have included the King and his entire Kavi following and household) into the strongest supporters thereof and indeed into the mainstay of that cause against all other enemies was a service which called for signal concessions, and the admission of the tumultuous Storm-God into the Magian pantheon was in the circumstances not too great a price to pay for such high service. It all ended in King Vishtaspa (see Yasht XVII. 61 and Yasht IX. 29) finally offering worship himself to the ill-used deity Ashi and also to Gōshurun (who presumably had received a similar treatment which failed to get expressly mentioned by accident). It is possible that the long list of epic and other heroes, who are made, rather irrelevantly and inconsequently, to come and offer worship to her in the same manner as Vishtaspa, was added from artistic considerations, so that Vishtaspa might not be made to figure as the one lone royal worshipper of these not too important deities. The list, as already stated, is a fairly close copy of the list in the Abān Yasht of the worshippers of the sovereign River-goddess Ardvi Sūra Anāhita (*vide* para. 289 *supra*).

(n) *The Zamyad Yasht.*

312. Arshtat, the genius of Veracity, we saw, provided the peg on which the author of the XVIIIth Yasht was able to hang his invocations to celebrate the Glory or Greatness (*Hvareno*) of the Aryan Community which in the political, social and moral conditions of the times possessed features distinctive enough in contrast with other contemporary communities of men to merit a Yasht devoted all to itself (para. 295 *ante*). But the institution of Royalty itself was a highly significant and distinctive feature of those of the Aryan communities which had come to profess Zoroastrian Magianism as their adoptive religion, for it was plainly to this institution of Royalty that this religion appears to have owed its spread and consolidation amongst these Aryan peoples. It did not, quite clearly also, immediately spread amongst those other Aryan communities which had not yet evolved Kavi lords of the Vishtaspa type. That there were Aryan tribes in Iran which had failed to evolve sovereign rulers, but had cast up at most host-leaders only, of the Indra type, is substantially borne out by the Vedic hymns. And it appears from the Tchang K'ien report (see pp. 31-33 *ante*), that so late even as 128 B.C., Bactria itself had not evolved a supreme local ruler, though the Avesta as clearly suggests that the Aryan-occupied country near Lake Hamun in

Seistan was not unacquainted with royal Kavi rulers. *Kavaem Hvareno* (Kingly Glory) was thus, in the eyes of the authors of the Yashts, a sufficiently arresting distinguishing feature of the Zoroastrianised Aryan countries (Airyana Vaejah) to call for a Yasht devoted solely to itself (*Kavaem Hvareno*). This is found in the Zamyad Yasht (Yasht XIX).

313. The Zoroastrian authors of the Yashts had certainly greater justification in tradition to include for celebration (in this Zoroastrianised Magian Shahnamah) the non-Aryan possessors of "Kingly Glory" than they had to introduce the Epic heroes of the Primitive Law amongst the worshippers of Ardvi Sūra Anāhita, for Royalty had in fact evolved and even risen to superb dimensions amongst the Non-Aryan neighbours of the Magians long before it was communicated to the later Iranian lords and masters of the Magians.

314. This Yasht exhibits many characteristically Paurāṇic features. It begins with an enumeration of the mountains, mythical and real.[100] Then follow the praises of successive possessors of the Kingly Glory: (*i*) Mythical heroes who ruled over all the Seven Karshvares, a much wider territory than this Earth which answered to one of them only. These were Haoshyangha the

100 Compare the similar Paurāṇic enumeration of countries in the Vendidad, Ferg. I.

Paradhata (he who smote two-thirds of the Daevas of Mazana and the Varenya[101] fiends), Takhma Urupa (who conquered all the Daevas), Yima, Thraetaona (who conquered Azi Dahāka the fiend who is said in the Abān Yasht, Yasht V. 29, to have had his home in Bawri = Babylon, 23 Sacred Books of the East, p. 60, note 3), Mithra and Kerasaspa (whose association with the Rangha and offer of hecatombs is found several times repeated in the Yashts). (*ii*) Kavis of the Kainyan dynasty associated locally with the Lake of Kasava (Hamun in Seistan) and the river Haetumant (the Helmund), of whom the most notable was Husravah (he who united all the Aryan nations into one kingdom). (*iii*) Zarathustra and King Vishtaspa. About the place of origin and the field of labour of these coadjutors and fellow labourers in the Zoroastrian cause there is some uncertainty, but the Bundahis evidence points to Atropatakan, modern Ajarbaijan, as the place of which they both were natives, from where the good religion spread through their efforts to eastward and southward. Vishtaspa according to the Yasht took Glory "standing bound from the hands of the Hunus and sought wide room for the holy religion of Ahura and Zarathustra" (Yasht XIX. 85). The Yasht closes with the confident vaticination

[101] Is "Varenya" a derivative like Varuṇa of the root Vṛ, "to cover," so that "Varenya fiends" originally meant the "Sky fiends," the Daevas ?

that Glory will finally cleave to the victorious Saoshyant and his helpers to come at the Resurrection.

315. This Avestan Shahnamah is in the style of the dynastic annals of the post-Vedic Indian Purāṇas and like the Saga-stuff of many other nations, which beginning with gods and mythical heroes glides almost imperceptibly down to historicity. Nothing comparable to these is to be found in the Vedic Aryan hymn literature, and naturally enough; for the Vedic Aryans knew no kings or royal possessors of territories of any noticeable dimensions in the Land of the Five Rivers. But their *asura* god *par excellence*, Varuṇa, is distinctly reminiscent of times when they had known Royalty, but of which no traditions had survived when the Vedic hymns took the shape in which we find them to-day. In the altered political conditions of the Land of the Five Rivers, where tribal units were warring bodies of men led by host-leaders, Indra naturally rose into special prominence as the custodian of Aryan (not Kingly) Glory, throwing the impracticable Varuṇa entirely into the shade. It was in the King-ruled Vrātya countries of the East that Indra first became the King of the gods, to degenerate still later into the typical eastern royal voluptuary, thereby marking a similar degeneration of royalty itself, in general repute, in those countries.

(*o*) *The Vanant Yasht.*

316. Yasht XX, the Vanant Yasht, celebrates the services performed by the second Regent Star in order of precedence, Vanant (= Vega), in withstanding the "accursed and most foul *khrafstras*" (reptiles and other like Ahrimanian creations); a Magian conception through and through, Vanant did not get his leader Tishtrya's chance of dressing himself up in Aryan habiliments.

(*p*) *The Cinvato Peretu (Bridge of Judgment) Yasht.*

317. It must be quite clear from what has gone before that the Magian *zoatars* (Zarathustra being one of that order) were an extraordinarily serious-minded variety of the human species, and that barring errors in detail, which are neither very important nor numerous, Diogenes Laertius's picture of them reproduced in Chapter IV was an entirely true and just representation of them. They were decidedly not a people habitually given to self-indulgence, least of all in the sensuous delights of the poetical imagination. In this they and the Vedic Aryans present diametrical contrasts which, I have endeavoured to show, were neither accidental nor the expressions of generically distinct types of mind. They were the outcome of age-long re-actions to highly differentiated environmental

circumstances, understood in the comprehensive sense which, as I have shown in my introductory remarks in Chapter I, has to be assigned to this expression.

318. It cannot be said of course with justice that the Yasht material in the Avesta is devoid of poetry of the sensuous order altogether. But though the men who were responsible for collecting and recording them must have been Magian *zoatars*, I shall, I hope, not be wrong in affirming that this poetry was as a whole contributed by the Iranian traditions which were and had to be received and incorporated into the Avesta in consequence of the syncretism which went with and followed from Zoroaster's proselytizing reform efforts.

319. But even the Magian imagination was able occasionally to rise superior to the benumbing influences of its highly introspective religious creed, and one specimen of Magian poetry which must have unloosed itself without Iranian aid (and in its grandeur of simplicity rising to truly epic heights) calls for special notice. This is furnished by Yasht XXII which addresses itself to tracing the flights and adventures of the human soul after it has parted from its corporeal frame.

320. The departing soul, according to Magian belief, waits on the precincts of the body for three whole days and nights (in order, no doubt, to afford the relations who survive, all the opportuni-

ties they need to perform their last services to him). The hymn-maker recounts how on the dawn of the fourth day, the waiting soul of the virtuous is visited by his own Good Conscience embodying herself as a beautiful maiden. "What maid art thou?" questions the soul of the faithful; to which the appropriate reply given, shortly stated, is, "Dost thou not know thine own Conscience? I was lovely, but thou madest me lovelier, I was fair, but thou madest me fairer. I was desirable, but thou madest me still more desirable." Beatrice-fashion, the maiden guides the Faithful Soul, now, to the House of Song (Garo Demāna) of Ahura, the Abode of Everlasting Light, where arrived, a faithful who has preceded him eagerly questions him concerning his experiences of the dread journey over the Bridge of Judgment. This ill-timed but excusable curiosity on the part of the previously arrived faithful soul is however checked by Ahura. "Ask him not what thou askest," kindly but firmly interposes Ahura. Zoroaster's God is here made out to have been a realist, as Zoroaster himself was, if I have read him aright. I would go so far even as to affirm that the Magian *zoatars* as a body, for all their subtleties and puerilities and their obsessions over rituals and ritualistic formulas, their spells and *mathras*, never for once allowed themselves to lose sight altogether of the realities of the world around them, which they for that reason never

described otherwise than as "the material world." They would not have been the dualists they were in their theosophy, and the sorry poets their religious literature on the whole makes them out to be, were they not such hard-seeing realists.

321. It was no doubt this in-bred realism of theirs which led the composer of this Yasht, after he had finished his description of the adventures of the departing Faithful Soul, to go immediately into a meticulous description of the parallel gruesome experiences of the Wicked Soul on his passage to the House of Darkness of Anghra Mainyu. The bathos of this picture (from the poetical, not from the approved theosophical point of view) is complete. The Wicked Soul is led there by an ugly old harridan who, theosophically speaking, quite appropriately answers his Bad Conscience. It is not necessary at all for my purpose to mar the sublime beauty of the first picture by going into the remaining details of its opposite.[102]

[102] See Yasht XXII. In verse 15 of this Yasht (which I have designated as the Cinvato Peretu Yasht), the embodied Conscience of the deceased Faithful is made to tell him about the three "Paradises" of "Good Thought," "Good Word" and "Good Deed" (Humat Hukht and Hvarsht) which are the three successive stages in the journey of the Faithful to the "Paradise of Endless Light" of Ahura. The corresponding "Hells" of "Evil Thought," "Evil Word" and "Evil Deed" which lie on the way of the soul of the Wicked to the abode of "Endless Dark-

(q) *King Vishtaspa and his Vizier Jamaspa.*

322. After all that has already heretofore been said and noticed concerning King Vishtaspa, not much remains to be told about him in connection

ness " of Anghra Mainyu are enumerated in Verse 33 of the Yasht.

There is no room for questioning the pre-Zoroastrian character of Yasht XXII or, at least, of the doctrines embodied in it. Paradise, Hell and the Prince of Darkness, must thus have been quite as familiar features of pre-Zoroastrian Magianism as Ahura Mazda himself. Zoroaster's contributions in relation to them consisted in his entirely original conception of World Redemption (Regeneration) and the manner in which all the forces of Good were aligned by him for giving battle to the similarly marshalled forces of Evil, to the end that the latter shall finally come out overcome and overwhelmed by the former. The struggle against Evil which this amongst other Yashts inculcates and the salvation it offers concern individuals and have no reference to the " Kingdom to Come " to be won by the conjoint efforts of all good souls (dead, living and to be born) under the leadership of Ahura, which is of the very essence of Zoroastrianism. By this one token alone, this Yasht stands out as pre-Zoroastrian Magian material. (*Cf.* paragraph 152 *supra.*)

The reader should further note that in the account given in Yasht XXII, the Wicked Soul arriving in Anghra Mainyu's abode does not receive the hospitable treatment which would be legitimately his due from the Prince whose loyal servant he has been (according to Zoroaster's conception of the relation between them) but is, on the other hand, served out with " poison and poisonous stench" (V. 36),

with the remaining two Yashts, Yashts XX and XXI, in so far as they bear upon the relations between the King and Zoroaster.[103] But special notice has to be taken, in connection with these Yashts, of the relations between Zoroaster and Jamaspa, Prime Minister of King Vishtaspa, and the future son-in-law of Zoroaster, he whom he came to honour finally as his fellow Saoshyant.

323. Like Queen Hutaosa, Jamaspa must have played an important part in bringing King Vishtaspa to Zarathustra's side from the opposing camp, to which the Ashi Yasht has shown he and the Naotarides formerly belonged.

324. Jamaspa was of the House of the Hvovas, in which Zarathustra found his wife of later years, Hvovi, apparently after he had succeeded in making good his position in King Vishtaspa's royal household as the latter's religious director. Dr. Moulton has categorically affirmed in his useful little Manual, "The Early Religious Poetry of Persia," that the Hvovas were "a noble family of Vishtaspa's Court." If by this he meant to suggest that this

whereby Ahura's purpose of punishing the wicked is fulfilled rather than thwarted. A like transition of the Devil from the agent to the opponent of Yahve is observable in the Bible. Job. 1. 6 12 ; II Samuel 24.1 ; Chron. 21.1.

103 For references to King Vishtaspa in the Gathas, see Yasnas XLIX, L and LI. These with Dr. Mill's valuable comments will be found at pp. 159-187 of 31 Sacred Books of the East.

family was an Iranian Kavi family, it is a statement to which the available evidence lends scarcely any support. This evidence taken as a whole points rather strongly to the conclusion that the Hvovas were a Magian family. That Frashaostra and Jamaspa belonged to a family of Magian "kinsman-lords" like the Spitamas appears from Ys. XLIX amongst others (*vide* para. 142 *supra*).

325. The Ābān Yasht, it is true (Yasht V. 68), makes Jamaspa offer to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita a royal sacrifice of a hundred horses, a thousand oxen and ten thousand lambs, when he sees the army of the wicked advancing upon him, accompanying the act with the prayer that "he be as constantly victorious as any one of all the Aryans." But his position as the Premier and right-hand-man of a pagan Iranian Aryan King fits into this description as well as, if not better even than if he was supposed to have been an Iranian noble, for of his having been a King there is not the shadow of any evidence. In the Yasnas (Yasna XLIX. 9, LI. 8), he is on the other hand invariably described as a sage and a prophet, a character which entirely accords with the reputed conferment on him by Zoroaster of the title of a *saoshyant* and his succession to the apostleship. But the question is placed altogether beyond doubt by an incident recorded in the Shahnamah of Firdausi cited by Darmesteter in a note at p. 70 of 23 Sacred Books of the East

(see also note at p. 68 of 47 Sacred Books of the East). On the eve of the battle about to be joined with Arjasp the Turanian, Vishtaspa asks Jamaspa to reveal to him in advance the issue of the encounter; and this he could not possibly have thought of doing if Jamaspa was only his Vizier and not a Magus besides. It was his dearly purchased victory in this battle which, according to tradition, confirmed Vishtaspa in his adherence to the Zoroastrian faith which he had, only recently, been persuaded to profess.[104]

326. Zarathustra's references to Jamaspa in the sermon he addresses to Vishtaspa plainly imply not only that he knew Jamaspa very intimately from before but also that he owed his introduction to the King to Jamaspa who, it further appears, was already held in high esteem by the King.

[104] This battle is said to have brought to a termination the reputed "War of Religion" which Arjasp is stated to have started at the instigation and upon the invitation of "Kavigs who were more of the same *race*" (*Zad Sparam* XXIII. 8 ; 47, S. B. E. 165). This statement strikingly confirms Herodotus's account of the non-homogeneous character, politically and socially, of society, in Media, before the same was organised by Cyrus and his successors. That the "Kavigs" in question objected to the New Dispension for other more practical reasons than religion can scarcely admit of doubt. No religious war, not even the Thirty Years' War of recent European history, has at bottom, and in relation to the motives of the leading protagonists on either side, been really religious.

327. Jamaspa later became Zarathustra's son-in-law. But he does not appear by any means to have owed the title of *saoshyant* which Zarathustra bestowed upon him and his succession to the apostleship after Zoroaster's death to that relationship. In conferring these upon Jamaspa, Zarathustra must have meant to give him full credit for his share in originating his reform movement and bringing it to a successful issue. If, as the evidence discloses, Jamaspa was a Magian *zaotar* by birth and breeding, he would have had as full a knowledge of the economic situation that bore so hardly upon his own community as Zarathustra himself possessed, whilst his position as Vishtaspa's Prime Minister placed him in the unique situation of being able to view the economic circumstances of the country as a whole from the wider standpoint of the government. It was this large, many-sided and at the same time intimate knowledge which he alone possessed as a cultured Magian and as Prime Minister, coupled no doubt as it must have been with natural sympathy for his own community, that must have prompted him to assume the part he appears to have taken in bringing together Zarathustra and his royal master and mistress, King Vistaspa and Queen Hutaosa. It is altogether possible that the very idea of approaching the King and Queen in the interest of the cause was originated by Jamaspa, and Queen Hutaosa appears to have been an even earlier convert to

Zarathustra's cause than her husband. It was in any case Jamaspa undoubtedly who appears from these Yashts to have prepared Vishtaspa (aided therein possibly by the Queen) for the respectful and even submissive hearing he is in them shown to have accorded to the adjurations of the Prophet. Jamaspa apparently was a great personality and a power by himself in the Court, a power of which he appears too to have made the best of uses. He could not have accomplished what he did as Zarathustra's coadjutor in the cause, if he had been Vizier only of the King, and not also a Vizier in whose judgment, integrity and good faith the King had learned to repose the fullest confidence. The title of *saoshyant* which Zoroaster had conferred upon this son-in-law of his could not have been a sinecure one.

§ 3. *Conclusions.*

328. I hope the Reader will by now have been convinced: (1) That Zarathustra himself was born a Magian and brought up as an *athravan*. (2) That the religion of his reforms was built upon unquestioned Magian foundations and not announced and propagated as a movement of active protest or dissent from the orthodox Magianism of his fathers. (3) That the protest his scheme of reforms undoubtedly represented was directed against Iranian oppressions, which

fundamentally were economic and political. (4) That the protest took nevertheless a religious turn and form, because the acts of oppression appeared to Zarathustra and his fellow Magians to be intimately bound up with and even conditioned by the religious practices of the oppressors. (5) That Zoroaster is not to be supposed on that account to have been fanatically disposed towards the Iranian Kavis whose active support, he fully realised (or was made by his fellow-*saoshyant* Jamaspa to realise), was indispensable to the success of his reforms and which he appears to have himself solicitously courted. It is highly probable, as I have already stated, that Zarathustra owed this remarkably statesman-like outlook of his to his association with (if not even to persuasion exercised upon him by) Jamaspa and other members of the Hvova family. (6) That he did not hesitate about or demur to adopting the best elements of the traditional Daevayasnian worship of the Iranian Kavi converts to his cause (also, perhaps, under Hvova tuition), in order to facilitate the progress of proselytization on behalf of his reforms amongst the Iranians. (7) That Zoroastrian Magianism in this way came to be a syncretic religion constructed round a Magian framework but out of materials furnished by both Magian and Iranian theosophies, supplemented, harmonised and vitalised by his own personal contributions which centred round his Gospel of

World Redemption. (8) That Zarathustra nevertheless was no latitudinarian, and Zoroastrian Magianism owed its militant doctrines of Evil, Hell, the Devil and Redemption to Zoroaster ; and he at least cannot be charged with having admitted anything into the creed which can be pointed at as deserving of moral opprobrium, or criticism even, as weak concessions made to the passions and prejudices of the royal converts to his creed and patrons of his cause. (9) That the Magian *athravans* who followed him in the Ministry, so far from guilefully seeking to circumvent his reform efforts, in the interest of what has been decried as a "Counter-Reformation," did really their very best and with marked success to carry out the advisedly syncretic spirit which Zarathustra himself had brought into the reforms. (10) That in the task of completion and consolidation to which they had to address themselves, Zarathustra's successors appear to have acted with considerable judgment as a rule, finding for each newly admitted Iranian element an appropriate place within the Magian framework, which again they did not hesitate to suitably bend when needed to make room for these imported materials.

329. But whatever view may come to be finally taken in appraisement of the Magian *zaotars'* work of perfecting and consolidating the syncretised Zoroastrian Magianism which Zara-

thustra had left in their hands at his death, of one thing I feel absolutely assured, and that is, that Zoroastrianised Magianism, as it is found embodied in the Avesta, lost nothing whatever morally from the Iranian intrusions, gaining immensely on the other hand in poetic quality, attractiveness and presentability as literature. In the due appraisement of the value of the work of Zoroaster's Magian successors, one fact calls for special notice, and that is, that no note of dissent or protest against that work can be found anywhere in the social, historical and religious records of the times that saw this work carried out and completed, or in those of the centuries that immediately followed when there were people still living who could appreciate and appraise that work in all its bearings as no modern savant can possibly do.

APPENDIX C.

ADVOCACY OF KHETUK-DAS IN PAHLAVI TEXTS.

(*See paras. 165, 168.*)

§ 1. *The Bahman Yasht Text.*

330. The Bahman Yasht (II. 61), 5 Sacred Books of the East, affirms that "the most perfectly righteous of the righteous is he who remains in the good religion of the Mazdayasnians and continues the religious practice of next-of-kin marriage in his family.[105] In the Shayast La-Shayast, Ch. XVIII, amongst the three things produced by Auharmazd against which Aeshma is made to complain to Aharman as being far too exceedingly good to be spoiled by any efforts of hers, one is *khetuk-das.* In a note to this chapter, West, after referring to the Parsi explanation that the passages in the Pahlavi texts advocating *khetuk-das* marriages even as between brother and sister and parent and child refer to the practices of heretics, observes, first, that the passages in question are obscure and have not been thoroughly examined (he himself has since gone, as far as it is possible for any one to do, to

[105] *Khetuk-das* marriage has been dealt with in paras. 160 to 172 *ante* of the Text.

make good this omission in the 18th Volume of the Sacred Books of the East); and secondly, that it is quite conceivable that the Parsi priesthood about the time of the Mahommedan conquest (when the practice came to be most extolled), were anxious to prevent marriages with strangers in order to hinder conversions to the foreign faith. This would no doubt furnish an additional motive for more strongly advocating such next-of-kin marriages as were already prevalent amongst the members of the faith but would not appear to be sufficient for the introduction for the first time of brother-sister or parent-child marriages amongst them. The general, quite unduly wide and sweeping, formulation of the doctrine must therefore have been there already before the Mahommedan conquest and was seized upon for further elaboration and emphasis, after it, for the reason suggested.

§ 2. *The Dadistani-Dinik and the Pahlavi Yasna Texts.*

331. The considerable collection of texts and materials which West has marshalled in the 18th Volume of the Sacred Books of the East includes Ch. XLV of Dadistani-Dinik, a text of a few years before 881 A.D., and composed therefore after the conquest.* This book seeks to demonstrate the rationality of *khetuk-das* by showing how impossible it would have been for the earth

to be peopled if the first created pair to marry and procreate issue in the usual way, being children themselves of the First Man, Gayomard, had objections to the brother-sister marriage (like what Yama, for instance is seen advancing against the overtures of his sister Yamī in the Vedic hymns). This Mashya and Mashiyoi brother-sister marriage, according to this writer, furnished a precedent worthy to be followed, as followed it was, by Hoshang, Takmorup, Yim and Fredun, among the early heroes. That the logic of this apologia could not stop with the brother-sister marriage is well brought out in the Pahlavi Yasna, XLIV. 4, where Auharmazd, the Creator himself, is suggested to have practised *khetuk-das* upon his own daughter Spendarmad (the Earth Spirit) to procreate Gayomard himself. As there is nothing to correspond to this passage in the Original Avesta, West rightly concludes that this allusion to the father-daughter *khetuk-das* in the Pahlavi Yasna was an interpolation on the part of the Pahlavi translator of the Avesta (18 Sacred Books of the East, p. 393).

§ 3. *The Dinkard Text.*

332. But the logic of the argument adopted in the Pahlavi Yasna did not stand exhausted by the instance which had suggested itself to the Pahlavi translators. It led inevitably almost to

the Dinkard, in Ch. 82 of its 3rd Book, propounding a most elaborate exposition of the *khetuk-das* marriage which brought the mother-son marriage directly within its sanction.

333. To a Jewish interlocutor whom the writer sets up to throw out the challenge to a Magian *athravan* to formulate the "reasons of the custom," the latter is made to reply as follows: God the first Creator created first the female Spendarmad (the Earth) and it was upon her, his own daughter therefore, that he procreated the First Man Gayomard, whose seeds again having fallen upon his mother, the Earth, at his death procreated the first human couple, Mashya and Mashiyoi who intermarrying produced others of the race. Divine sanction or something very near it was thus, step by step, found for all the most reprobated forms of the *khetuk-das* marriage.

334. The Dinkard author can har supposed to have felt confident in having su ed in bringing conviction home to the hyp cal Jewish interlocutor, for he followed facile cosmogonico-genealogical argument second line of defence calculated to appeal who was not of the Faithful. This stres advantages of a pure-bred race of virtuous which *khetuk-das* marriages in these forms alone was calculated to secure, in the strain in which modern pure-line-l fanatics of science have occasionally bee

inveighing against what they emphatically declare to be superstitions of an unregenerate law. Like these fanatics of modern science the Dinkard fanatic for the maintenance of Mazdayasnian purity of inheritance was not to be repelled by the patent " hideousness " of the institution he advocated. " Hideousness and beauteousness," he roundly affirmed, " do not exist in things, but arise through the habit of taking up an opinion and belief," so that all that was necessary to see things as they were was " to get out of accustomed opinions and beliefs." How again, he asked, could this supposed hideousness be considered to affect him who did not find it hideous according to the law which he considered to be binding upon himself?

§ 4. *Conclusions.*

:5. My view, already outlined in the Text :. 160-172 *ante*) is that *khetuk-das* marriages ;st relations nearer than first cousins were in fact practised at any time amongst any in Persia except in the Achaemenian Royal where also it was confined to the brother-narriage, which itself had been brought into in that house for the sake of conforming to stom of the Pharaohs after Cambyses had iimself installed as Pharaoh in consequence conquest of the Pharaohnic throne and the ıcerdotal Pharaohnic royal office. Magian

doctrinal support for this newly adopted custom of the Achaemenian house must have been sought and obtained to regularise it in the eyes of the Persian subjects of these Kings, the Persian Judges themselves having declared against its validity as a Persian custom when Cambyses sought their opinion in that behalf.

336. But it was not easy to light upon a reason which would justify the brother-sister marriage only and stop there. The attempt had to be given up or pushed to the point of including both forms of the still more objectionable parent-child marriage. The Magian theologians of Cambyses's time who were presumably responsible for propounding this obliging doctrine and the Pahlavi writers of post-Mahommedan era are, to my mind, more to be pitied than anathematized for advocating these *khetuk-das* marriages. They themselves, I feel sure, never practised wh·' they preached any more than would be prepar the "pure-line" fanatics of modern sc their own families and households, in the science and in order to set an example to th stitious common herd whom theoretically for their ignorance quite as much as the *athravan* did his Jewish interlocutor for hi

337. The Mahommedan conquest c demand for *khetuk-das* marriages whic have been and probably was quite sati met by first-cousin marriages. In fact

next-of-kin marriages appear to have ever taken place at any time after the brother-sister marriages in the Persian royal families disappeared with the disappearance of those families themselves. The Parsis and the Persian Zoroastrians, all available evidence goes to show, never have contracted any nearer than first-cousin marriages, either before the Mahommedan conquest or since. But the doctrine was already there, formulated in terms which justified these nearer marriages, and so it fell to the Pahlavi writers to work to death just that doctrine as it stood in the extraordinary manner they are seen to have done, in their frantic effort to prevent intermarriages of members of the Zoroastrian faith with those of the community which came to profess the non-Mazdayasnian creed of their conquerors and alleged oppressors. The new turn of events, by putting the Mazdayasnians on their defensive behind ramparts which 't compelled to raise before a proselytizing of even greater force and momentum ei own, ended by reducing the Church t which they had inherited from Zoroaster narrow watertight corporate organisation, he victorious religion of the conquering nedans went on spreading around and till it almost completely inundated the that was Airyana Vaejah once, and ar beyond its widest conceivable limits direction of the compass.

APPENDIX D.

The Racial Genius Myth.

(*See Chapter I.*)

338. Chapter I of the book and considerable portions of Chapter II concern themselves with reasons for discarding hereditary racial factors as determinants of characteristic cultural traits amongst peoples. In the absence of available observational data spread over sufficiently long periods of time, the reasons there adduced unavoidably fall short of apodictic conclusiveness. They should nevertheless suffice to bring into clearer relief the extravagance of the assumption lying behind passages like the following: "Every race has a different kind of soul—by soul is meant the spiritual, intellectual and moral re-action to environment and daily experience—and the soul of the race is reflected in the soul of the individual that belongs to it. This racial soul is the product of thousands or hundreds of thousands of years of past experience and re-action—it is the essence or distillation of the spiritual and moral life of the race" (H. F. Osborne in "Man Rises to Parnassus," p. 220). In his "The Racial History of Man," 1923, Ronald B. Dixon makes a similar assumption in more matter-of-fact language (pp. 518-19).

Americans both of them, their views are plainly coloured by the apprehension common to the descendants of the earlier European colonisers of the American Atlantic sea-board that the superior strain they represent is being swamped by or suffering deterioration through intermixture with later immigrants who, they are convinced, are inferior breeds.

339. Against these fears, entertained regrettably enough by men of unquestioned eminence in scientific research, it is refreshing to be able to cite from a very recent contribution by Professor Franz Boas of the Columbia University (*Science*, 11th December, 1936) the conclusion he has arrived at after seventeen years' observation and study in relation to the problem (as he himself states it) "of the assimilation of alien population transplanted into a new cultural medium in which they form a minority." For solution he depended mainly but not exclusively on data collected in the United States ; for, as he points out, nowhere can this question be better studied than in the United States "with its great influx of immigrants from all parts of the world." His various approaches to the problem, he concludes, show "first of all, that no race can be treated as a unit, but that in every case the individual must be evaluated according to his own characteristics. It follows, furthermore, that at least so far as the aspects studied are concerned, the descent of the indivi-

dual plays an insignificant rôle in his behaviour, that the organism is so plastic that in its physiological, mental and social behaviour it follows the pattern of culture with which he becomes identified." This, it will be found, is in entire agreement with the thesis maintained in the book.

APPENDIX E.

KARMAVĀDA AND OTHER DOCTRINES OF METEMPSYCHOSIS.

(*See Paras. 245, 250, 255 and 303.*)

340. Metamorphosis (of pupa, for instance, into butterfly) has been a familiar and striking enough feature of the primitive man's biological surrounding to account for the origin of the wide-spread belief that man too and even spiritual personages may undergo not dissimilar transformations, at special crises of their lives at least. Belief in a low form of metempsychosis occurring habitually at death (ancestral souls lodging themselves inside snakes in order to be born again as men is a recurring form of it) is a slightly more sophisticated variation of the same belief and derived like it from analogies apparently furnished by nature herself.

341. The *Karmavāda* of Post-Vedic Indian theosophy and the like belief of the Yezidis are highly artificial departures from these *naive* forms, the transmigrations here being above all *ethically* conditioned.

342. Cæsar in his "Gallic War" (VI. 14) is found recording observations in regard to a species of belief in metempsychosis which is more closely

related to the conception of Hades (before it had evolved the gruesome complications of a Tartarus) which (*vide* Note 90, p. 225, and Note D, p. 235, *supra*) was widely current amongst Early Aryan and Semitic peoples. The Keltic Druids of Gaul and Britain, according to him, were sedulous in imparting to their youthful pupils a belief in the indestructibility of the human soul, which, according to that belief, merely passed at death from one tenement to another. Such a doctrine alone, by robbing death of all its terrors, was capable, they said, of developing the highest form of human courage. The doctrine implied that the soul at every one of its transmigrations passed into a fresher and younger *human* frame, and had no ethical significance.

343. As to the diametrically opposed points of view presented by the *Karmavāda* of the Upaniṣads on the one hand and the *pitṛloka* conception of the Vedic Aryans on the other, see the Author's monograph on "Indo-Aryan Literature and Culture," pp. 145-46, 155-61.

APPENDIX F.

Disposal of the Dead.

(See Paras. 96-99, 159, 167, 171, 188-189, 251 and 254.)

344. Three distinct modes of disposal of the dead, all evolved amongst "Aryan" peoples, came up for consideration in the above paragraphs of the Text, the *dakhma* exposure (Magian), burning (Vedic Aryan), and burial (Iranian). Cremation is known to have been practised by the Greeks and the Romans also, well within historic times.

345. Casting off corpses for disposal to wolves and ravens does not appear to have been confined to the Magians and Parsis only. In his "Central Asia and Tibet," Vol. II (1903), Sven Hedin describes the Nomad Tibetans' attitude towards their dead (as he observed it) when, being refused admittance into Lhassa, he and his party were turned back from Lake Tso-nekk and sent with an escort of nomad Tibetans to Ladak. A Mahommedan of his own party dying on the journey, the Tibetans expressed great surprise at the amount of trouble the party was taking over the burial of the body. "Why don't you fling the corpse out to the wolves and ravens ?" they asked ; and when shortly afterwards one of the Tibetans also died, this was exacty what they did with his corpse (pp. 451 and 492).

346. How the City and Monastery Tibetans deal with their dead has been related in Hedin's "Trans-Himalaya" (1910), Vol. I, pp. 370-73, Vol. II, p. 11. After performing the funeral rites, they hand over the corpse (usually to a member of a special caste) to be cut up and exposed to the vultures. When the bones have been picked clean, they are ground up, kneaded into paste and thrown in small lumps to the birds.

347. The points of view and practice of the Mongols in Inner and Outer Mongolia have been recorded in some detail by Dr. Roy Chapman Andrews in his "On the Trail of Ancient Man" (1926). These Mongols, he observed, regard a corpse as the abode of evil spirits and therefore a most undesirable thing to have about the house. "Sometimes the body is placed upon a cart and driven rapidly across rough ground so that it will fall off, the driver hurrying on without looking back, fearful of attracting the evil spirits to himself. Meanwhile dogs, birds and wolves make short work of the corpse, only the bones, which every native shuns, being left." Great black dogs slink about and fight over the bodies that are dragged from the city to where the bones of the dead so treated are left to accumulate.

348. "The Mongols object greatly to having anybody die within a *yurt* (tent) ; and when one member of a family is seriously ill, the others frequently decamp before the end comes. They

run no risk of encounter with a malign spirit" (pp. 147-48).

349. Amongst the Nagas of Assam, Mr. C. Suydam Cutting observed the following customs (see *Natural History*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, Jan.-Feb., 1933, p. 61) : "In some cases the body is placed in a sort of oval coffin open at the top. This is suspended just below the rafters in the house where the family is living. A small fire is then started and kept burning till its gentle heat has entirely desiccated the body. In the bottom of the coffin there is a hole through which any fatty liquids of the body can run out. Eventually, after having been in the house for months, the body is taken down and broken up. If any bones remain whole they are preserved for ever in a box which is kept in the house, the rest being tossed over a cliff. Another method is to place the body on a raised platform where it is stretched out and covered over." Obviously, the more settled in homes people come to be, the more trouble they have with their dead.

350. The Magians' *dakhma* presumably originated in as simple a practice as Sven Hedin found prevailing amongst his Tibetan escorts. The essentials of the practice were apparently never abandoned, but they got profusely overlaid by rites and ceremonials evolved subsequently to their changing from nomads to householders. How greatly overlaid they finally came to be by rites

and ceremonials can be gathered from the description of the present-day practice of the Persian Zoroastrians in Dr. A. V. Williams Jackson's "Persia, Past and Present" (1909), pp. 381-94.

351. As the greatest pollution comes from touching anything that is dead, elaborate rules for an Ablution of Nine Nights (*barashnūm nū shaba, noshva*) have to be gone through with the most scrupulous care in order to restore ceremonial purity lost by contact with the dead. It consists in a series of sprinkling with bull's urine and consecrated water, accompanied by an endless amount of ritual in aid of the exorcism of the spirit of contamination (which is not quite the same thing as the "malign spirit" of the Mongols).

352. When a person is dying, a *mobed* or priest is summoned to administer last rites which includes the pouring on his lips of some drops of consecrated bull's urine (*gōmēz*).

353. After death the corpse must not be touched by any except those who must. A professional corpse-washer washes it wearing gloves of wool, an assistant pouring *gōmēz* from a brass bowl with a long-handled spoon.

354. *Sag-did* (glance of a dog) ceremony is repeated several times, the gaze being supposed to drive away *nasu* (the spirit of defilement).

355. The corpse is first placed in the *Zadomarg* (charnel-house) where the *mobeds* chant the Gatha Ahunavaiti and *sag-did* is performed before

it is taken out to the *dakhma* where it is given in charge to two *nasā sātārs* (Chiefs of the Dead) who must be men of advanced years and of high moral character, and yet must lead segregated lives so long as they do not resign and after resigning have not performed the "Nine Nights' Washing Ceremony." After reciting chants, prayers and formulas (amongst other ceremonials) they withdraw leaving the corpse to the birds of prey. When the bones have been denuded and become dry, they are usually laid in a separate place in the *dakhma* and turn to dust.

356. According to present and ancient belief, the soul hovers near the earth for three days before taking its departure to the other world. But various rites continue to be observed even after the third day, *e.g.*, on the tenth and the thirteenth days, on the return of the day each month and on the anniversary.

357. It should be finally noted that where there is no regularly constructed *dakhma*, the corpse is carried to a remote place in the hills, piled round with stones which are covered over with a slab, but it is not interred.

358. The treatment of the dead, by itself, obviously affords no criterion for determining the *racial* affinities of peoples.

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